



A. Jackson Pin.

J. B. Jones (Engr.)

John Wesley

A
COMPREHENSIVE
HISTORY OF METHODISM.

IN ONE VOLUME.

EMBRACING

ORIGIN, PROGRESS, AND PRESENT SPIRITUAL, EDUCATIONAL, AND BENEVOLENT STATUS
IN ALL LANDS.

BY

JAMES PORTER, D. D.,

AUTHOR OF "COMPENDIUM OF METHODISM," "WINNING WORKER,"
"CHART OF LIFE," etc.

"We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you."

ZECH. VIII, 23.



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FAC-SIMILES.

THE following Signatures of JOHN WESLEY were taken from the originals:

John Wesley 1780

For upwards of eighty years
I have kept my accounts exactly I will
not attempt it any longer being satisfied
with the continual conviction that I save
all I can & give all I can. Yes, all I have
John Wesley
July 16. 1790

WESLEY'S LAST ENTRY IN HIS PRIVATE JOURNAL.

"N. B. For upwards of eighty-six years I have kept my accounts exactly. I will not attempt it any longer, being satisfied with the continual conviction that I save all I can and give all I can; that is, all I have. John Wesley. July 16, 1790.

Wesley
John Wesley

JOHN WESLEY'S LAST SIGNATURE IN THE JOURNAL OF THE CONFERENCE.

EDITOR'S NOTICE.

THE author of the volume now presented to the public wields one of the most prolific pens in the Methodist communion. His life has extended over some of the most important periods in the history of the Church. He has been a close student of the history and polity of the Church, and an actor in some of its most interesting crises and stirring scenes. His "Compendium of Methodism," one of the most useful and popular works on that subject, is just now passing into a new edition, and he now sends forth a new history of the Church, giving a succinct account of Methodism in its British and early American periods, and a fuller exhibit of its later phases than any work extant, bringing the recital down to the present time. History must first be written by contemporaries, and yet contemporary history is always more or less partisan. It can not do otherwise than partake of the color of the opinions, judgments, and feelings of the actors. It must be left to future generations to pass impartial verdicts on the doings of the present. Each actor who writes up recent history writes from his own stand-point, and the statements of contemporary authors often conflict. The historian of the future will sift accounts, balance probabilities, and get at truth often

at a distance from either extreme. Publishers have no alternative but to let an author express his own views, subject to criticism from those who differ in opinion, or from the better informed in matters of fact. Dr. Porter took decided part and expressed decided views, and in these pages records his own opinions on the slavery question, lay delegation, and the New York Book Room troubles. All these agitations have now passed away, and some of them will require less and less space for record, and will by and by fade out of the memory of man altogether. As a convenient manual for facts and dates, we think the public will be satisfied with the volume of Methodist history which is herewith submitted.

PREFACE

IN presenting this volume to the public, the author deems it appropriate to say that he does not pretend to any new discovery. The arrangements of Methodism require its operations to go upon record in some shape from year to year. Besides, it has been fortunate in its historians. To say nothing of the earlier writers, Dr. Bangs's "History of the Methodist Episcopal Church," in four volumes, will always be valuable as a repository of important documents, some of which are nowhere else in print; but few of our young people take the trouble to read them. Dr. Abel Stevens's seven volumes, three on Methodism generally, and four, giving the history of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States, are intensely interesting, but too voluminous for the masses. Multitudes have not the means to purchase, or the time to read them. Furthermore, both of these authors leave the strange and startling events of the last thirty-five years entirely out of sight, closing their volumes at the dawn of their occurrence, leaving important principles and measures,

to say nothing of men, under reproach, which the providence of God has since vindicated.

Mr. Stevens's condensed "History of American Methodism," in one octavo volume of 608 pages, runs hastily over some of these events, reaching to 1866, but is still so large and expensive as to render it inconvenient to many of our people. Besides, it overlooks interesting facts, which the honor of the Church now requires to be developed, since others are taking credit to themselves that properly belongs to us.

The object of the writer has been to combine the most instructive features of Methodist history from the beginning in their chronological order, and in a manner to bring them within the reach of the masses of our people, both as to price and the time necessary to compass them. In doing this, he has tabulated many statistics, to which few have ready access, that must often be very useful, even to ministers. His aim has been to make the work correct and convenient for every body who desires to mark the providence of God in the wonderful achievements its details.

Back of all this, and underlying the whole plan, is the profound conviction that many of our people, young and old, are suffering in their faith, feeling, and power of usefulness, by not having a better understanding of what God has done, and is doing, for and through the Church. Many are restricted in

their undertakings by not appreciating the probability, if not positive certainty, of divine assistance. By reading of His wonders, they will acquire confidence to trust Him and go forward.

Methodism originated in a little book, which awakened its founders, and led them to prayer. It has been largely stimulated and promoted by other books. The press and the pulpit have worked together. Where one has failed, the other has succeeded. When the Church stops reading she will stop growing. She needs to be filled with facts, not fiction. The strongest incitements to faith and right action are found in what God has done by small means and under difficulties. The true history of Methodism is its best vindication. We have aimed to place such a history within the reach and comprehension of our young people, that they may be inspired, and carry forward the work to its grand consummation.

THE AUTHOR.

BROOKLYN, August 21, 1875.

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PART FIRST.

HISTORY OF METHODISM IN EUROPE.

CHAPTER I.

THE STATE OF RELIGION IN THE WORLD, WITH SOME PRELIMINARY ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF METHODISM.

ONE hundred and thirty-six years ago the religious world was divided into sects and parties, much as it is at present. Roman Catholics were in the ascendant, and claimed universal jurisdiction by divine right then, as now, and enforced obedience to their mandates as far as practicable by pains and penalties. The Church of England, which had gradually separated from Rome, and in the early part of the sixteenth century become entirely independent, with Henry VIII for its supreme head, was much like its abandoned mother, spiritually: proud, pretentious, hierarchal, and oppressive. Baptists had been in organized existence more than two hundred years, pressing their distinctive views of baptism, and had made considerable headway, both in Europe and America. Presbyterians, Independents, Quakers, Dutch, and Dutch Reformed, Puritans, Congregationalists, and other classes of Christians were all at work

in their respective ways to enlighten and save the world. But there were no *Methodists*. The name was unknown as the representative of any religious denomination, though it had been reproachfully applied to a class of non-conformists more than a hundred years before, of whom little has been since heard.

Now we find this name familiar in the four quarters of the globe, representing a numerous people, holding about the same faith, maintaining much the same religious order, and all working with more or less zeal for the conversion of the world to Christ. The latest reports show that nearly ninety thousand ministers, traveling and local, and four millions of members, bear this novel name, and all claim John Wesley as their founder and leader under God. And yet they have never had State patronage, or been much favored by the rich or great, but have been persecuted almost every-where, and sometimes even unto death.

A work so wonderful, surpassing every thing of the kind in the history of religion, is worthy of consideration. The object of the present writing is to furnish a brief outline of its history for the encouragement of its friends to cleave to the old appliances which God has so highly honored, and push forward heroically to still greater achievements.

THE STATE OF RELIGION AT THE BEGINNING.

To form a proper estimate of the work, it will be necessary to glance at the condition of affairs at the outset. It is not enough to say that spiritual religion was in a very low state. Infidelity was rampant. Voltaire, the notorious French infidel, was

born in 1694, and shook the world by his atheistical writings. Much of the literature of the age was not tainted merely with his sentiments, but thoroughly corrupted. He did not speak without apparent reason when he predicted that Christianity would be overthrown throughout the world in the next generation. The Church was little better than the State. Sin in all its vulgar forms reigned every-where. Vital piety was unknown except to the few, and they were accounted fanatics. "It was just at the time," said Mr. Wesley, "when we wanted little of filling up the measure of our iniquities that two or three clergymen of the Church of England began vehemently to call sinners to repentance." Think of it, "*two or three*" out of thousands.

Bishop Burnet, in his seventieth year, in his profound love to his people, says, "I can not look on without the deepest concern, when I see the imminent ruin hanging over this Church, and, by consequence, over the whole reformation. The outward state of things is black enough, God knows; but that which heightens my fears rises chiefly from the inward state into which we have unhappily fallen.

Our ember weeks are the burden and grief of my life," referring to the ignorance of young men coming to be ordained without any knowledge of the Scriptures or even of the Catechism. Watts spoke of a general decay in vital religion, not in the Church only but among dissenters, and urged "every one to use all possible efforts" for its recovery

It was a sporting, godless age. Frolic and fun seem to have eaten out the vitals of religion, and ungod-

liness reigned. "Ungodliness," said Wesley, "is our universal, our constant, our peculiar character," in confirmation of which we might fill volumes from the writings of both friends and foes. The darkness of that day was so intense that Whitefield, with all his religious advantages, when agonizing with conviction, had no idea of vital religion; for, he says, "I knew no more that I was to be born again in God, born a new creature in Christ Jesus, than if I was never born at all." And Mr. Wesley though brought up in the Church under the most favorable circumstances, was equally ignorant, and had to leave the country and the Church to obtain the light necessary to his salvation, as we shall see hereafter. His brother Charles was no better off, for when John was earnestly seeking God, and confessed himself a sinner, he was "very angry," and thought he had done great mischief.

The fact is, the Romish Church had long since reduced religion to a mere ceremony, and her English daughter had followed her example. That ceremony duly observed, nothing remained but to enjoy life without any satisfactory evidence of acceptance with God, and await the result. Some, however, were rigidly pious, according to their light. They were *servants* of God, trembling and quaking before him, but not happy sons and daughters, rejoicing in his love.

THE BIRTH OF JOHN WESLEY.

In this state of society, John Wesley the distinguished founder of Methodism, was born, at Epworth, England, June 17, 1703, old style. There was

nothing peculiar about his birth, nor was a birth any strange event in his father's family, he being the sixth child that had appeared there in a very short time. His father, Rev. Samuel Wesley, was rector of the Epworth Church, having but little income, and had no prospect of doing much for his rapidly growing family, which at last increased to nineteen children. With no outward manifestation of divine interest, as in the case of the babe in the manger, the outlook was not very encouraging. Yet, as in that case, there was some peculiarity in the family stock. His ancestors had been distinguished for intelligence, piety, and especially independence of thought and action. His great grandfather, Bartholomew Wesley, a clergyman, renounced the established Church and joined the Puritans, for which he afterward suffered great persecution from the government, not being allowed to live within five miles of any of his old parishes. His son, John Wesley, inherited his scruples, and stood up for the right like a hero, but was pursued, fined, imprisoned four times, and worried into the grave, just as he was contemplating escape to America, at the age of thirty-four years, thus overwhelming his venerable and admiring father with sorrow and death. And all for non-conformity to the ritualistic ceremonies of the English hierarchy.

Samuel Wesley, the father of John, was a man of great practical wisdom and piety, according to the times in which he lived. Inheriting the independence of his ancestors, however, he rejected their non-conformity, though he admired their character, and took orders in the Church. His career at Oxford was strikingly illustrated by that of his worthy sons,

John and Charles, to which we shall hereafter refer, being poor, economical, liberal, religious, and active in ministering to the souls and bodies of the unfortunate and neglected. He was a good scholar, and a voluminous writer, with strong proclivities to poetry, which kept him "beating rhyme" all through his life. His preaching is said to have been pointed, which, with his High Church and State politics, subjected him to much annoyance from his parishioners, who drummed, and fired guns about his door, injured his dog, cattle, and other property, and twice fired his house. Once, too, they arrested him on some slight pretense as he was leaving his Church, and took him to jail, from which he wrote to the Archbishop of York, "Now I am at rest, for I am come to the haven where I have long expected to be; and I don't despair of doing good here and, it may be, more in this new parish than in my old one."

But all this did not break down his spirits. He set himself to benefit his fellow-prisoners, reading prayers daily and preaching Sundays. Nor did his equally heroic wife forsake him. Writing to the archbishop again he says, "'Tis not every one who could bear these things; but I bless God, my wife is less concerned with suffering than I am in writing, or than, I believe, your grace will be in reading them. When I came here my stock was but little above ten shillings, and my wife's at home scarce so much. She soon sent me her rings, because she had nothing else to relieve me with, but I returned them."

We mention this not to approve of ministers holding on to an unwilling people, (for we think that when they are persecuted in one city they had better "flee

into another”), but to indicate the energetic character of the man. He had a will and power of endurance that knew no surrender where he was sure that he was right. This characteristic, though highly commendable, and its opposite equally despicable, often leads people into many ridiculous embarrassments, especially where it is connected with religious bigotry. It did so with this good man. He was an intense loyalist, and, observing one evening at the close of family prayers, that his wife did not respond “Amen” to the prayer for the king, asked her the reason. She replied that she did not believe in the title of the Prince of Orange to the throne. “If that be the case,” he replied, “we must part; for if we have two kings we must have two beds.” His wife being “inflexible,” he soon left, and was gone about a year, when the king died, and Queen Anne ascended the throne. Being now agreed again, he returned, and matters went on harmoniously between them as before.

With all this apparent austerity, he was genial, and often not a little humorous, which relieved his other peculiarities. On the whole, he was a strong, good man, ahead of his times in Christian enterprise. Dr. Stevens justly says: “He had the zealous energy of his Methodist sons; and, had it not expended itself in incipient literary labors, it would probably have led him into extraordinary evangelical schemes, like those which resulted in Methodism.” But, as it was, he seemed to foresee better days for religion. “Be steady,” he said to his son Charles, when nearing his end; “the Christian faith will surely revive in this kingdom. You will see it, though I shall not.”

Mrs. Susanna Wesley, the mother of John and Charles, was a woman of extraordinary character and capacity. Her father, Dr. Samuel Annesley, was an eminent Non-conformist minister, and suffered much persecution. Richard Baxter pronounced him "totally devoted to God." Too much can hardly be said in his praise as a man or a Christian. Still, his daughter, imitating his independence, took sides in the argument with the Church against the Dissenters at the age of *thirteen* years, and six years after was married to Samuel Wesley—a thoroughly educated, beautiful young lady, "one of the completest characters, moral and intellectual, to be found in the history of her sex." Dr. Adam Clarke, speaking of her, says: "Such a woman, take her all in all, I have not heard of, I have not read of, nor with her equal have I been acquainted." "Many daughters have done virtuously, but Susanna Wesley has excelled them all."

She seems to have been a woman of high common-sense, of vast capabilities for her position, and wonderful effectiveness. Though she had so large a family, and guided and educated them all as few mothers ever did, she found time to keep herself posted on the questions of the day, so that she was able to correct the errors of her talented sons, and keep them out of trouble to which they were exposed. Seeing that John was becoming a little mystified by brooding over Thomas a Kempis's "Imitation," she wrote him, "I take Kempis to have been an honest, weak man, who had more zeal than knowledge," hitting the nail of his error square on the head. How she could find an hour each morn-

ing and evening for meditation and prayer, with all her domestic cares, it is difficult to understand, to say nothing of several important literary projects which she devised. But this is aside from our point. It is the *stock* which we are considering, and we find it to be of the first order on both sides.

FAMILY TRAINING.

The education of the Wesleys was commenced at the rectory, under the sole direction of their mother. The family school was opened and closed with singing, and continued from nine till twelve and from two till five. No one was taught to read until five years old. The system was perfect, and did much to lay the foundation of our ecclesiastical economy, which has attracted so much attention.

Mrs. Wesley, though opposed to Dissenters, was no slave to the Church, but followed reason and common-sense in training her children and others for God and usefulness, beyond the range of the established formulas. In the absence of her husband, she opened the rectory to her neighbors, and conducted religious service herself by reading sermons, prayer, and conversation. Her husband was horrified at such an innovation, and wrote her accordingly; but she assured him that she chose the most awakening sermons they had, and allowed no worldly conversation. "We keep close to the business of the day," she said, "and as soon as it is over, they all go home. And where is the harm of this? I believe we had above two hundred hearers last Sunday, and many went away for want of room." Afterward more came than ordinarily attended the Church, with some who

never attended, and a considerable number were reformed. The parish clerk was alarmed, and wrote to the rector to hurry home and stay the disorder; but he hesitated to take sides with dead Church order against his good wife and her loving and reforming neighbors. He proposed that she should take the responsibility of stopping the meetings, to which she replied, "Do not advise, but command me to desist." A distinguished writer remarks that in this letter—and it is equally true of the whole proceeding—"she was bringing to its place a cornerstone of the future Methodism."

It is a great thing to be "born again," "born of the Spirit," but it is almost equally necessary to the best practical results to be born into the world *right*—of the right stock—and to be educated from birth for our life's work. The Wesleys had every thing in their birth and training to adapt them to the extraordinary mission to which they were called. Their parents were first called, their father a poet and their mother an organizer and a governess, and both benevolent, enterprising, and persistent. In this happy combination of qualities, we find the Spring from which Methodism has gone forth to replenish a perishing world.

Another event at the rectory is worthy of notice. We have referred to the fact of its being twice set on fire by the rabble. In the first instance it was partially consumed, the family only escaping in their night-clothes, the mother being considerably burned. Her safety having been ascertained, it was found that John, then six years old, was missing. The father attempted to reach his room, but was driven

back by the flames in despair. Kneeling down upon the ground to commend his soul to God, the little fellow awaked, and, seeing his danger, ran to the window and was taken out safely by one peasant standing upon the shoulders of another, just as the roof fell in. "Come, neighbors," said the father, as he received his son, "let us kneel down; let us give thanks unto God. He has given me all my children, let the house go; I am rich enough." That brand plucked out of the fire has since improved the spiritual fortunes of millions.

JOHN WESLEY LEAVING HOME.

At the age of eleven, John was placed under that eminent scholar Dr. Walker, principal of the Charter House school. Here he had some rather severe experiences, though a favorite with his tutors; but, such was his application, at the age of *sixteen* he was elected to Christ Church, Oxford. Being placed under Dr. Wigan, a gentleman of great classical knowledge, he pursued his studies with much energy. His natural temper, it is said, was gay and sprightly, with a turn for wit and humor. Mr. Babcock observes of him that "when he was about twenty-one years of age, he appeared the very sensible and acute theologian—a young fellow of the finest classical taste, of the most liberal and manly sentiments. His perfect knowledge of the classics gave a smooth polish to his wit and an air of superior elegance to all his compositions."

Being about to enter into deacon's orders, his attention was called to the nature and importance of the work, and the motives and qualifications neces-

sary to its successful prosecution. Reflection led to some just perception of the magnitude of the undertaking, and that to further investigation. He now began to study divinity with a new zest, and became more anxious than ever to enter into orders. Some of the books that occupied his attention were among the most spiritual and heart-searching of the age, such as "The Imitation of Christ," by Kempis, and Bishop Taylor's "Rules of Holy Living and Dying." These made a deep impression, and aroused his whole soul to the subject. If they were right, he was wrong. In his extremity, like a true son, not spoiled by a college course, he wrote to his parents, stating his difficulties, and received very able and interesting responses from each of them. This correspondence drew out the best thoughts of both pupil and teachers; but, while it indicates deep interest in the subject of religion generally, it betrays the want of a clear understanding of salvation by faith.

ORDAINED DEACON AND RETURNS TO EPWORTH.

Having fully prepared himself for the holy office, according to the standard of the age, he was ordained deacon on the 19th of September, 1725, by Dr. Potter, then Bishop of Oxford. This only increased his interest in the study of divinity and the classics, and such became his standing for character and learning that on the 17th of March, 1726, he was elected Fellow of Lincoln College, an appointment of no inconsiderable honor or profit, and one that was not without its influence on the work for which Providence was preparing the way

The following Summer he spent at Epworth and

Wroote, reading prayers, preaching twice on the Sabbath, and otherwise assisting his father in the various duties of his parish. This situation was highly favorable to his interests, not only as it gave him an opportunity to cultivate the pastoral office under the paternal tuition of an experienced master, but to mature his knowledge of experimental and practical theology by frequent conversations with his esteemed parents, which he did not fail to improve. On the 21st of September, he returned to Oxford, and was soon chosen Greek lecturer and moderator of the classes, though little more than twenty-three years of age, and not yet advanced to the master's degree.

His advancement in religious tendencies was not less marked. Writing to his mother about this time, he says: "The conversation of one or two persons, whom you may have heard me speak of (I hope never without gratitude), first took off my relish for most other pleasures, so far that I despised them in comparison of that. I have since proceeded a step further, to slight them absolutely; and I am so little at present in love with even company, the most elegant entertainment next to books, that, unless the persons have a religious turn of thought, I am much better pleased without them. I think it is the settled temper of my soul that I should prefer, at least for some time, such retirement as would seclude me from all the world, to the station I am now in. Not that this is by any means unpleasant to me, but I imagine it would be more improving to be in a place where I might confirm or implant in my mind what habits I would without interruption before the flexibility of youth is over."

How to dispose of himself in accordance with these predilections was not easy to determine. He first thought of a school in Yorkshire, which fell into the hands of another who stepped in before him. His father, having two livings, and not finding it convenient to obtain an assistant to his mind, now invited him to become his curate, which he did.

ORDAINED PRIEST AND RETURNS TO OXFORD.

In July, 1728, he was inducted into the office of priest, and soon after left his curacy at the call of the rector of his college, and returned to Oxford. Here he found his brother Charles standing vigorously up against the tide of infidelity which was setting in upon the students on all sides, and united with him in the pursuit of learning, and in doing good. Besides attending to the duties of his office, he became tutor to various pupils placed under his care, and labored assiduously for their welfare. His address to the tutors of the university indicates the objects and spirit of his endeavors. "Ye venerable men," said he, "who are more especially called to form the tender minds of youth, to dispel thence the shades of ignorance and error, and train them up to be wise unto salvation; are you filled with the Holy Ghost? with all those fruits of the Spirit which your important office so indispensably requires? Is your heart whole with God? full of love and zeal to set up his kingdom on earth? Do you continually remind those under your care that the one rational end of all our studies is to know, love, and serve the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent? Do you inculcate upon them,

day by day, that love alone never faileth? Whereas, 'whether there be tongues, they shall fail,' or philosophical knowledge, 'it shall vanish away;' and that without love all learning is splendid ignorance, pompous folly, vexation of spirit? Has all you teach an actual tendency to the love of God, and all mankind for his sake? Have you an eye to this end in whatsoever you prescribe touching the kind, the manner, and the measure of their studies; desiring and laboring that wherever the lot of these young soldiers of Christ is cast they may be so many burning and shining lights, adorning the Gospel of Christ in all things? And permit me to ask, Do you put forth all your strength in the vast work you have undertaken? Do you labor herein with all your might, exerting every faculty of the soul, using every talent which God hath lent you, and that to the uttermost of your power?"

The process by which his mind had reached this intensity of religious devotion is best stated in his own words, which are as follows: "In the year 1725, being in the twenty-third year of my age, I met with Bishop Taylor's 'Rules and Exercises of Holy Living and Dying.' In reading several parts of this book, I was exceedingly affected with that part in particular which relates to *purity of intention*. Instantly I resolved to dedicate all my life to God: all my thoughts and words and actions: being thoroughly convinced that there was no medium, but that every part of my life must either be a sacrifice to God or to myself, that is, in effect, to the devil.

"In the year 1726 I met with Kempis's 'Christian Pattern.' The nature and extent of inward religion,

the religion of the heart, now appeared to me in a stronger light than ever it had done before. I saw that giving even all my life to God would profit me nothing, unless I gave my heart, yea, all my heart, to him. I saw that simplicity of intention and purity of affection, one design in all we speak or do, and one desire ruling all our tempers, are indeed the wings of the soul, without which we can never ascend to the mount of God.

“A year or two after, Mr. Law’s ‘Christian Perfection’ and ‘Serious Call’ were put into my hands. These convinced me more than ever of the absolute impossibility of being half a Christian. And I determined through his grace to be all devoted to God, to give him all my soul, my body, and my substance. In 1729 I began not only to read, but to study the Bible, as the one, the only, standard of truth, and the only model of pure religion. Hence, I saw, in a clearer light, the indispensable necessity of having the mind which was in Christ, and of walking as Christ also walked; even of having, not some part only, but all the mind which was in him, and of walking as he walked, not only in many, or in most respects, but in all things. And this was the light wherein at this time I generally considered religion, as a uniform following of Christ, an entire inward and outward conformity to our Master.”

This conviction and this consecration were correct. They strike the topmost round of religious possibility. He seems to have apprehended the whole thing at a glance, and given himself fully to its pursuit by penances and prayer, rather than by faith in Christ.

MOVEMENTS AT OXFORD.

Under these convictions he entered more fully into the work of God. Conversing with his brother Charles, afterward with Mr. Morgan, Mr. Hervey, (one of his pupils, and author of the "Meditations"), Mr. Whitefield, and others, they agreed to meet and read divinity on Sunday evenings. The next Summer they began to visit the prisoners in the Castle, and the sick and poor in the town. By degrees their meetings assumed a more religious character, and embraced in their exercises the careful examination of the Greek Testament, and close personal conversation on the deep things of God. To these means of spiritual improvement they added the observance of the Wednesday and Friday fasts, and the weekly sacrament. They were fifteen in number, and as Mr. Wesley observed, "*all of one heart and mind.*"

Such a spectacle could but attract attention, especially as religion was in a low state; there being little of it in the community, except the form, and scarcely enough of that to meet the claims of the municipal law, or the rules of the university. Each one spake of the young men according to his particular fancy; some well, some ill. A rude youth, of Christ Church, observing the exact regularity of their lives and studies, characterized them as "*a new set of Methodists,*" in allusion to a class of ancient physicians distinguished by that name. The same spirit of reproach which suggested the title gave it popularity, and immortalized the young men it was designed to crush. Taking no offense at any thing, and, withal, perceiving that their new cognomen

expressed in a word exactly what they would be in life and godliness, they responded to it in all cheerfulness, as their successors have done, hoping never to dishonor it by the least departure from the ways of well-doing.

The history of this little company is full of interest, and may be found detailed in Moore's "Life of Wesley." It is a checkered page, exposing the enmity of the carnal mind, and illustrating the truth of the declaration, "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution;" but not more fully than it confirms the encouraging announcement of the Holy Spirit, "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." The conflict was severe, but they succeeded. Many were benefited by their endeavors, and they received a hundred-fold in discipline for the more difficult achievements of coming days. Mr. Wesley was the master spirit of the band. His absence from Oxford, only for a few weeks, was attended with serious consequences in several instances, which compelled him to see the importance of his presence to its growing interests. Hence, when urged to accept his declining father's place at Epworth, a sense of duty required him to resist, and still cleave to his pupils and the little society with which he was surrounded.

CHAPTER II.

FURTHER PARTICULARS OF THE LEADING SPIRITS CONCERNED
IN THE ORIGIN OF METHODISM, EMBRACING
THEIR CONVERSION.

WE have followed John Wesley with some particularity from his birth to the priesthood and fellowship at Oxford, standing at the head of the "Holy Clubb." Let us now glance at some of the other master spirits, beginning with

CHARLES WESLEY.

Charles was born December 18, 1708, more than five years after his brother John. He was sent to Westminster, and placed under the tuition of his brother Samuel. While there Garret Wesley, of Ireland, no relation of his, however, except in name, proposed to adopt and make him heir to his large estate; but after due consideration, he declined the generous overture, and, to use the language of his brother John, "made a fair escape" from fortune. But Richard Colley accepted the position, and became distinguished by holding many important offices, going to Parliament, and finally by becoming Baron Mornington, the grandfather of the Marquis of Wellesley and the Duke of Wellington.

Charles prosecuted his studies, and was elected, at the age of eighteen years, to Christ Church College,

Oxford. He was healthy and buoyant, never knowing, as he afterward declared, "fifteen minutes of low spirits" during his life. Still he was oppressed with religious convictions that he was out of harmony with God, and far from that communion with him which the Scriptures represent as possible. This was owing in part, at least, to his good mother, who never ceased to bear him on her heart. "Now," said she to him, in good earnest, "resolve to make religion the business of your life; for, after all, that is the one thing necessary. All things besides are comparatively little to the purposes of life."

He, too, read "Kempis" and other similar works, which led to self-abnegation, inward struggles, and outward sacrifices, to merit and produce holiness without faith in Christ and without any certain knowledge of having it. At Oxford he became one of the Holy Club, and is said to have been the first to be called a "Methodist." Here, too, he became a Bachelor of Arts and a college tutor, and graduated to the ministry in due course.

GEORGE WHITEFIELD.

Whitefield was born in poverty at the Bell Inn, Bristol, in 1714, some eleven years after John Wesley, and had few opportunities for religious improvement. At fifteen years of age he "put on his blue apron and his snuffers," and went into the work of a "common drawer." As to his religious condition, he says, "If I trace myself from my cradle to my manhood, I can see nothing in me but a fitness to be damned." But the inevitable little work of Thomas á Kempis, which made such an impression on

the Wesleys, fell into his hands and deeply impressed him with religious convictions, under which he fell to fasting twice a week for thirty-six hours together until he fasted himself almost to death, praying many times a day, and going to the church and the sacrament continually. Hearing of the Holy Club at Oxford, "he loved them." With these feelings he entered the University as a "poor student," where he paid his expenses chiefly by serving other students who were in better circumstances. Here he made the acquaintance of Charles Wesley, and found a congenial spirit. Joining the Club, he says, "they built me up daily in the knowledge and fear of God, and taught me to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." Being impulsive and a fond admirer of Kempis, he veered at one time toward Quietism; but was converted by the Wesleys, who had been saved from the same error by their excellent mother. After they left Oxford he became the ruling spirit of the Club, and maintained that rigid application to study and religious discipline which was to qualify him to shake the world by his eloquence.

WESLEY'S MISSION TO AMERICA.

Having but just escaped the importunities of his friends to accept the rectorship at Epworth, by the assignment of that living to another party, John Wesley was designated as the most suitable person to take charge in the Georgia colony, as a missionary, both of the colonists and the Indians. Whether he ought to accept this call was too grave a question to settle hastily. Therefore he took time to consider, and immediately wrote to his mother and other

friends, as he was wont do on all questions of magnitude. His mother replied in these memorable words: "Had I twenty sons, I should rejoice that they were all so employed, *though I should never see them more.*" His brother Samuel acquiesced in the measure, as did his eldest sister, and some others; but still he hesitated. At length, however, after reasonable deliberation, he determined to leave Oxford and go to America. His brother Charles signifying his willingness to accompany him, arrangements were made for that purpose, and they commenced their voyage about the middle of October, 1735. "Not to avoid want," says Mr. John Wesley, "God having given us plenty of temporal blessings, nor to gain the dung and dross of riches and honor; but singly this, to save our souls, and to live wholly to the glory of God.

They left London, October 14, 1735, and found on board the ship one hundred and twenty-four persons. The ship at once assumed the aspect of a church and school, under the generally recognized leadership of John Wesley, having specified hours for public worship, study, and private devotions. (Wesley's Works, Vol. III, pp. 14-18.) The example of these pious young ministers is worthy of the careful study of the traveling clergy of the present day.

Their labors in Georgia were not so successful as they anticipated, particularly among the Indians, and their conflicts and sufferings were considerable. The fact is, John Wesley, to say nothing of his brother, was a High-churchman, and carried out his honest convictions to the letter, much like the Puseyites of the present day. This injured their influence, as it

ought to have done. Then they were ceremonially too religious, and imposed *burdens* without the *joys* of salvation, which few of any age or country are inclined to embrace except in the immediate presence of death and hell, and then only as the least of evils.

Seeing that they could effect nothing to their satisfaction, they returned to England wiser and better men than when they left it, Charles in about *one* year, by the way of Boston, where he preached in the King's Chapel, and John fifteen months later. But their mission was not a failure, though it did not succeed in its primary design. God's plans were deeper and broader than those of his sincere but misguided servants. The truth is, anxious as Mr. Wesley had been to be wholly the Lord's, and scrupulously as he had lived in all godliness and honesty, he did not know God or himself or human nature, and was utterly unprepared for the great work for which he was being trained. He needed this very experience, just as much as Saul of Tarsus needed to go to Damascus and *see* religion exemplified in Ananias and the other disciples, and be instructed by them in the kingdom of God, in order to fit him for his destined work. Notwithstanding all his fastings, self-denials, and spiritual agonies, he had never been born again, and was ignorant of justification by faith and the renewing of the Holy Ghost as an instantaneous work. He had worked and suffered for salvation, but had not *believed* with a heart unto righteousness. He *hoped* that he was a Christian, but had no joyful assurance of it, and therefore was more of a *servant* than a *son* of God, and was influenced more by *fear* than *love*; and yet, according to the prevail-

ing theology of the day in its brightest and purest aspects, he lacked nothing but continuance in well-doing to insure him the highest enjoyments of religion here and an inheritance with the saints hereafter.

A NEW DISCOVERY.

The chief advantage of the Georgia mission is yet to be stated. It was the attainment of a proper understanding of the new birth and its influence on the heart. This was to come from a source that human wisdom would not have suggested, yet in admirable accordance with the simplicity of the divine plan of humbling the pride of man and of securing all the glory of his salvation to Him to whom it rightfully belongs.

When he embarked for Georgia, he found twenty-six Germans on board, all members of the Moravian Church, and deeply experienced in the things of God. Observing their Christian deportment, Mr. Wesley set himself to learn the German language, that he might converse with them. The existence of fear in his own heart, and the exhibition of peculiar graces in the Moravians, gave him much trouble. Referring to them, he said: "I had long observed the great seriousness of their behavior. Of their humility they had given a continual proof by performing those servile offices for the other passengers which none of the English would undertake, for which they desired and would receive no pay, saying, 'It was good for their proud hearts, and their loving Savior had done more for them.' And every day had given them occasion of showing a meekness which no injury could move. If they were pushed,

struck, or thrown down, they rose again and went away, but no complaint was found in their mouths. There was now an opportunity of trying whether they were delivered from the spirit of *fear*, as well as from that of pride, anger, and revenge. In the midst of the Psalm wherewith their service began, the sea broke over, split the mainsail in pieces, covered the ship, and poured in between the decks as if the great deep had already swallowed us up. A terrible screaming began among the English; the Germans *calmly sung on*. I asked one of them afterward, 'Was you not afraid?' He answered, 'I thank God, no.' I asked, 'But were not your women and children afraid?' He mildly replied, 'No, our women and children are not afraid to die.'"

On reaching Georgia, he had further intercourse with these pious people, and was more deeply convinced of the imperfection of his religion and the hollowness of his Churchly pretensions, though he slept on the ground and went barefooted to work out his salvation.

THE RESULT STATED.

The result of all his study and observation on his own heart, during his absence, is stated in his journal. January 8, 1738, he wrote:

"By the most infallible of proofs—inward feeling—I am convinced, 1. Of *unbelief*, having no such faith in Christ as will prevent my heart from being troubled. 2. Of pride throughout my past life, inasmuch as I thought I had what I find I have not. 3. Of gross irrecollection, inasmuch as in a storm I cry to God every moment; in a calm, not. 4. Of levity and luxuriancy of spirit, appearing by my speaking words not tending to edify, but most by the manner of my speaking of my enemies. Lord, save or I perish! Save me, 1. By

such a faith as implies peace in life and death; 2. By such humility as may fill my heart from this hour forever with a piercing, uninterrupted sense that hitherto I have done nothing; 3. By such a recollection as may enable me to cry to thee every moment; 4. By steadiness, seriousness, sobriety of spirits, avoiding as fire every word that tendeth not to edify, and never speaking of any who oppose me or sin against God without all my own sins set in array before my face."

A few days after, as he was nearing the English shore, he wrote:

"I went to America to convert the Indians; but O, who shall convert me? Who is he that will deliver me from this evil heart of unbelief? I have a fair Summer religion. I can talk well—nay, and believe myself—while no danger is near; but let death look me in the face, and my spirit is troubled. Nor can I say, '*To die is gain.*'"

'I have a sin of fear, that, when I've spun
My last thread, I shall perish on the shore.'"

On arriving home, and reviewing his whole life in the light of divine truth and the developments of Christian experience he had observed in his German friends, he wrote again:

"And now it is upward of two years since I left my native country in order to teach the Georgian Indians the nature of Christianity. But what have I learned myself in the mean time? Why—what I, least of all, suspected—that I, who went to America to convert others, was never converted myself. *I am not mad*, though I thus speak, but speak the words of truth and soberness, if haply some of those who still dream may awake, and see that as I am so are they. Are they read in philosophy? So am I. In ancient or modern tongues? So was I also. Are they versed in the science of divinity? I, too, have studied it many years. Can they talk fluently upon spiritual things? The very same I could do. Are they plenteous in alms? Behold, I give all my goods to feed the poor. Do they give of their labor as well as of their substance? I have labored more abundantly than they all. Are they willing to suffer for their brethren? I have thrown

up my friends, reputation, ease, country; I have put my life in my hand, wandering into strange lands; I have given my body to be devoured of the deep, parched up with heat, consumed by toil and weariness, or whatsoever God shall please to bring upon me.

"But does all this (be it more or less, it matters not) make me acceptable to God? Does all I ever did or can know, say, give, do, or suffer, justify me in his sight? Yea, or the constant use of all the means of grace (which, nevertheless, is meet, right, and our bounden duty); or that I am, as touching outward righteousness, blameless; or (to come closer yet) the having a rational conviction of all the truths of Christianity? Does all this give me a claim to the holy, heavenly, divine character of a Christian? By no means. If the oracles of God be true—if we are still to abide by the law and the testimony—all these things, though when ennobled by faith in Christ they are holy and just and good, yet without it are '*dung and dross.*'

"This, then, I have learned in the ends of the earth: that I am '*fallen short of the glory of God;*' that my whole heart is '*altogether corrupt and abominable,*' and consequently my whole life (seeing it can not be that '*an evil tree*' should '*bring forth good fruit*'); that my works, my own sufferings, my own righteousness are so far from reconciling me to an offended God, so far from making any atonement for the least of those sins which 'are more in number than the hairs of my head,' that the most specious of them need an atonement themselves, or they can not abide his righteous judgment; that, having the sentence of death in my heart, and having nothing in or of myself to plead, I have no hope but that of being justified freely, 'through the redemption that is in Jesus.' I have no hope but that, if I seek, I shall find the Christ, and 'be found in him, not having my own righteousness, but that which is of God by faith.'

"If it be said I have faith (for many such things have I heard from many *miserable* comforters), I answer, So have the devils a sort of faith, but still they are strangers to the covenant of promise. So the apostles had even at Cana in Galilee, when Jesus first 'manifested forth his glory'—even then they, in a sort, '*believed on him,*' but they had not then 'the faith that overcometh the world.' The faith I want is '*a sure trust*'

and confidence in God that, through the merits of Christ, my sins are forgiven, and I reconciled to the favor of God; that faith which enables every one that hath it to cry out, *'I live not, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.'* I want that faith which none has without knowing that he hath it; is *'freed from sin; the whole body of sin is destroyed'* in him. He is freed from fear, *'having peace with God through Christ, and rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God;'* and he is freed from doubt, *'having the love of God shed abroad in his heart through the Holy Ghost which is given unto him, which Spirit itself beareth witness with his spirit that he is a child of God.'*"

WHITEFIELD'S CONVERSION.

As before hinted, when the Wesleys left for America, Mr. Whitefield naturally became the leader of the Holy Club at Oxford, and had to work on without their assistance. His struggles were more intense than ever, though in the beginning of his convictions at Bristol he lay "prostrate on the ground for whole days in silent or vocal prayer." "God only knows," he says, "how many nights I have lain upon my bed groaning under what I felt." For forty days during Lent he ate nothing but coarse bread and tea, except on Saturdays and Sundays. After about seven weeks of unutterable sufferings, God graciously gave him the spirit of adoption and assured him of his acceptance. "O!" said he, afterward, "with what joy, joy unspeakable, even joy that was full of glory, was my soul filled, when the weight of sin went off, and an abiding sense of the pardoning love of God, and a full assurance of faith broke in upon my disconsolate soul. Surely it was the day of my espousals, a day to be had in everlasting remembrance. Go where I would,

I could not avoid the singing of psalms almost aloud. Afterward, they became more settled, and blessed be God, saving a few casual intervals, have abode and increased in my soul ever since."

In this happy state of mind he returned to Bristol, and was soon ordained by the Bishop of Gloucester, "When," he says, "I offered up my whole spirit, soul, and body to God's sanctuary. Let come what will, life or death, depth or height, I shall henceforward live like one, who this day, in the presence of men and angels, took the holy Sacrament upon the profession of being inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon me that ministration in the Church. I can call heaven and earth to witness, that when the Bishop laid his hands upon me, I gave myself up to be a martyr for Him who hung upon the cross for me."

Without this consecration and baptism the name of Whitefield would have hardly been known. The appreciating bishop gave him five guineas, "A great supply," said Whitefield, "for one who had not a guinea in the world;" and he returned to Oxford, after preaching his first sermon at Bristol, to push on the work of the "Holy Club." But such a light could not be kept under that bushel. He was soon called to London and other places to preach, and every-where the people of all classes flocked to hear him. His word was sharper than a two-edged sword, and though he preached five times a week he could hardly get to any pulpit for the throngs that crowded upon his ministry. Thus matters went on until he sailed for Georgia, at the earnest solicitation of Mr. Wesley. But as he sailed out of the port Mr.

Wesley sailed into it on his return, and recorded the results of his American mission to which we have referred. Mr. Whitefield carried his new life on ship-board, and preached, prayed, and lived with marked effect on the passengers and crew. Finding that Mr. Wesley had left, he remained in the colony but about four months, and then embarked for England. But his labors during this brief period were incessant, and, we trust, lastingly beneficial, though but few traces of them still remain.

NEARING THE POINT.

Being oppressed by his new discoveries, and hearing of Mr. Whitefield's spiritual emancipation, Mr. Wesley left no means unemployed to obtain the blessing he so earnestly desired. Count Zinzendorf, the founder and protector of the Moravian Society, a man of learning and deep experience, coming into the country about that time, Mr. Wesley consulted with him, as he did with one Peter Boehler, another pious Moravian. They kindly listened to all his difficulties, and endeavored to impart such advice as his case required. It was difficult for one of his mental structure, education, and religious notions, to come directly to the point. The idea of depending on nothing but Christ, and on him *now*, for salvation, and the correlative one of instantaneous conversion,—a sentiment generally discarded in the Church,—gave him great trouble. Still he kept inquiring and praying with all his heart.

Thinking that, perhaps, he ought to quit preaching until he should realize what he now saw to be necessary, he asked his friend Boehler whether he should

not, who replied: "By no means; preach faith *till* you have it; and then, because you have it, you *will* preach faith." "Accordingly," says he, "I spake clearly and fully, at Blendon, to Mr. Delamotte's family, of the nature and fruits of Christian faith. Mr. Broughton and my brother were there. Mr. Broughton's great objection was, 'he could never think that I had not faith, who had done and suffered such things.' My brother was very angry, and told me 'I did not know what mischief I had done by talking thus.' And, indeed, it did please God then to *kindle a fire* which I trust shall never be extinguished."

Mr. Wesley felt deeply for others who were still seeking to be justified by the works of the law, as well as for himself. Some, to whom he spoke, received the word gladly, and found rest to their souls by faith; but many doubted. Nevertheless, he committed his whole being to the work, and by labors and watchings and tears, such as alarmed his friends, and brought down upon him the reproaches of even many who professed better things, to say nothing of others, he spread the truth of what he believed to be the power of God unto salvation.

CHARLES WESLEY'S CONVERSION.

His brother Charles resisted for a time, but at length yielded the point, confessed himself to be without God and without hope in the world, and earnestly sought redemption in the blood of the Lamb, even the forgiveness of sins. "May 21st," says Mr. Moore, his biographer, "he waked in hope and expectation of soon attaining the object of his wishes. At nine o'clock his brother and some friends

came in, and sung a hymn. When they left, he betook himself to prayer. Soon afterward, a person came and said in a very solemn manner, 'Believe in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, and thou shalt be healed of all thine infirmities.' The words went through his heart, and animated him with confidence. He looked into the Scriptures, and read, '*Now, Lord, what is my hope? truly, my hope is even in thee.*' He then cast his eyes on these words, '*He hath put a new song into my mouth, even a thanksgiving unto our God; many shall see it and fear, and put their trust in the Lord.*' Afterward he opened upon Isaiah xl, 1, 'Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God; speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins.' In reading these passages of Scripture he was enabled to view Christ as '*set forth to be a propitiation for his sins, through faith in his blood,*' and received, to his unspeakable comfort, that peace and rest in God which he had so earnestly sought.

"The next morning he waked with a sense of the divine goodness and protection, and rejoiced in reading the 107th Psalm, so nobly descriptive, he observes, of what God had done for his soul. Yet he had no self-confidence. 'This day,' says he, 'I had a humbling view of my own weakness, but was enabled to contemplate *Christ in his power to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by him.*'"

JOHN WESLEY STRANGELY WARMED.

Though Mr. John Wesley had not yet realized the fullness of what he was urging upon the acceptance

of others, he was not discouraged. May 24th (three days after his brother's conversion), about five in the morning, according to his own account, he opened his Testament on these words, "*There are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature.*" "Just as I went out," says he, "I opened it again on these words, '*Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.*'" In the afternoon I was asked to go to St. Paul's. The anthem was, 'Out of the deep have I called unto thee, O, Lord; Lord, hear my voice. O, let thine ears consider well the voice of my complaint. If thou, Lord, wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss, O, Lord, who may abide it! But there is mercy with thee; therefore, thou shalt be feared. O, Israel, trust in the Lord; for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption: and he shall redeem Israel from all his sins.'

"In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's 'Preface to the Epistle to the Romans.' About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, *I felt my heart strangely warned. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.*"

This was the crisis toward which God had been drawing him for years—the luminous point he must reach to be properly endowed for his high calling. It was indispensable for him to *know* the things whereof he affirmed. This revelation of God to his

soul assured him that what he had believed was the truth as it is in Jesus, and enabled him to declare it with unwavering confidence. It revealed to him the *nature* and evidences of religion with the clearness of light, and gave him the "power with God and with men" that was necessary to the position which he was to occupy.

In determining the magnitude of this wonderful change, it must be remembered that he regarded it as the same that he saw among the Germans on ship-board, and that he had sought ever since. It was evidently more than *pardon*. His consecration being *complete*, lacking nothing so far as he saw, or can now be discovered, and seeking "all the mind which was in Christ," is it not reasonable to believe that he was then and there saved from all sin? Certainly it was a more thorough work than is generally experienced in conversion.

WESLEY AMONG THE MORAVIANS.

Having obtained this wonderful sense of God's love, Mr. Wesley felt inclined to see more of the singular people who had advised him in his time of distress, and took a journey on foot to Herrnhut, on the borders of Bohemia, where he found about a hundred houses, and a persecuted people, who had fled from the tyranny of Romanism to enjoy religious liberty. He spent about two weeks with them, and seems to have enjoyed it very much. "God," he wrote, "has given me, at length, the desire of my heart. I am with a Church whose conversation is in heaven, in whom is the mind that was in Christ, who walk as he walked. O, how high and holy

a thing Christianity is, and how widely distant from that which is so called." He heard Christian David, who struck the first blow with his ax in starting the colony, and heard him say, speaking of justification, "The right foundation is not your conviction, though that is not your own; not your righteousness, but the righteousness and the blood of Christ. To him that believeth on God that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness. This do, then, go straight to Christ with all your ungodliness; tell him, Thou seest that I am ungodly; I plead nothing else. I do not say that I am humble or contrite, but I am *ungodly*; therefore, let thy blood be the propitiation for me." Every thing about them was religious; even their recreations and funerals resounded with praise to God.

Mr. Wesley was delighted, and would "gladly have spent his life" there had he not heard the Master calling him to other fields. Gathering many useful hints as to doctrine and discipline, he retraced his steps to carry them into effect in spreading Scriptural holiness over the world, reaching England September, 1738.

CHAPTER III.

THE ORGANIZATION AND EARLY PROGRESS OF METHODIST SOCIETIES, WITH THE ORIGIN OF SEVERAL OF THEIR PECULIARITIES.

THE happy conversion of the three distinguished characters, detailed in the preceding chapter, made a powerful impression on the public mind. In their new zeal, they went forth preaching to crowded assemblies in such demonstration as had never been known in England, and, of course, were soon shut out of the churches, and driven to hospitals, prisons, private dwellings, and Moravian meeting-houses, to which they were always welcome. They had glorious times in all these places, and many were enabled to believe.

Speaking of a love-feast, Mr. Wesley says, "About three in the morning, as they were continuing instant in prayer, the power of God came mightily upon them, insomuch that many cried out for exceeding joy, and many fell to the ground." Whitefield called it a "Pentecostal season indeed."

THE FIRST METHODIST SOCIETY.

Following the instincts of their new life, no less than the dictates of a sound policy, the little band had previously organized themselves into a society

for mutual improvement, agreeing to the following regulations:

1. That they would meet together once a week, to "confess their faults one to another, and pray one for another, that they might be healed."

2. That the persons so meeting should be divided into several bands, or little companies, none of them consisting of fewer than five, or more than ten persons.

3. That every one, in order, should speak as freely, plainly, and concisely as he could, the real state of his heart, with his several temptations and deliverances since the last time of meeting.

4. That all the bands should have a conference at eight every Wednesday evening, begun and ended with singing and prayer.

5. That any who desire to be admitted into this society should be asked, What are your reasons for desiring this? Will you be entirely open, using no kind of reserve? Have you any objections to any of our orders?

6. That when any new member was proposed, every one present should speak clearly and freely whatever objection he might have to him.

7. That those against whom no reasonable objection appeared, should be, in order for their trial, formed into one or more district bands, and some person agreed on to assist them.

8. That after two months' trial, if no objection then appeared, they should be admitted into the society.

9. That every fourth Saturday should be observed as a day of general intercession.

10. That on the Sunday seven-night following, there should be a general love-feast, from seven till ten in the evening.

11. That no particular member should be allowed to act in any thing contrary to any order of the society; and that if any persons, after being therein admonished, should not conform thereto, they should not longer be esteemed as members.

This took place in London, and has been regarded the *origin* of Methodism. Mr. Wesley, however, refers its origin to three distinct periods. He says, "The first rise of Methodism was in

November, 1729, when four of us met together at Oxford. The second was at Savannah, in April, 1736, when twenty or thirty persons met at my house. The last was at London, on this day [May 1, 1738], when forty or fifty of us agreed to meet together every Wednesday evening, in order to free conversation, begun and ended with singing and prayer." The reader can place it to suit his own judgment. But, if we mistake not, place it where he will, he will recognize God as its author; his glory, and the best good of man, its tendency and aim.

SHUT OUT OF THE CHURCHES.

The Wesleys were now objects of special attention. They had been generally considered "over-much righteous" for several years, though they had not entirely broken loose from the prevailing errors of the times. But now that they had imbibed sentiments which, if true, involved nearly the whole Church in condemnation—branded their righteousness as "filthy rags," and their long cherished hopes as vain and deceptive, they were supposed to be crazy. And the more so, because they professed to have demonstrated the truth of their doctrine by a joyful experience of its provisions in their own souls. Men care little about cold opinions, but, as one writer observes, "speak of faith in such a manner as makes Christ a savior to the utmost, a most universal help and refuge; in such a manner as takes away glorying, but adds happiness to wretched man; as discovers a greater pollution in the best of us than we could before acknowledge, but brings a greater deliverance from it than we could before expect; if

any one offers to talk at this rate, he shall be heard with the same abhorrence as if he was going to rob mankind of their salvation, their Mediator, or their hopes of forgiveness."

Mr. Wesley had been refused permission to preach in many of the churches of London some time before, but now more especially. He therefore preached as the providence of God opened his way. "In several places, while he was expounding the Scriptures, many persons trembled and fell down before him. Some cried aloud, and others appeared convulsed as in the agonies of death. Many of these were afterward eminent professors of the holiness and happiness of religion, and declared they had at the time such a deep sense of the nature of sin, and of the just wages of it, that they were constrained to cry aloud for the disquietude of their heart." Writing to a friend, he says:

"Though my brother and I are not permitted to preach in most of the churches in London, yet, thanks be to God, there are others left, wherein we have liberty to speak the truth as it is in Jesus.

Nor hath he left himself without witnesses of his grace and truth. Ten ministers I know now in England, who lay the right foundation, '*The blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin.*' Over and above whom I have found one Anabaptist, and one, if not two, of the teachers among the Presbyterians here, who, I hope, love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and teach the way of God in Truth."

ORIGIN OF FIELD PREACHING.

This was encouraging, but still the way of these good men was hedged up. What could they do?

Various plans were suggested, but they seemed to look more to this world than to the next, and were therefore rejected. Mr. Whitefield was heartily united with the brothers in the work of God. But where could he preach? Not in the churches, for they were generally closed; not in private dwellings, for they were too small. Preaching one day "with great freedom of heart and voice," to a crowded assembly, while a thousand more stood around the church, and not a few retired for want of room, the happy thought of proclaiming the Word of God as Christ did, in the open air, rushed upon his mind. He mentioned it to a few friends, but they did not favor it, they thought it disorderly and fanatical; but after making it a matter of prayer for a while, he betook himself to the fields and highways, and thus attracted thousands to hear the Gospel who would not have gone to the churches had they been open. Mr. Wesley hesitated a little at this seeming irregularity, but when he came to consider the example of Christ, and that he was excluded from the churches, "I submitted," says he, "to be yet more vile, and proclaimed in the highways the glad tidings of salvation, speaking from a little eminence in a ground adjoining to the city [Bristol] to about three thousand people." He did not *choose* this position; but accepted it as the best that was open to him to preach Christ and save souls. And God evidently approved, for "many who had set all laws, human and divine, at defiance, and were utterly without God in the world, now fell before the majesty of heaven, and acknowledged that 'a prophet was sent among them.' Cries and tears on every hand frequently drowned his voice, while many ex-

claimed in the bitterness of their soul, 'What must I do to be saved?' Not a few of these were soon '*filled with peace and joy in believing,*' and evidenced that the work was really of God, by holy, happy, and unblamable walking before him. Blasphemies were now turned to praise, and the voice of joy and gladness was found where wickedness and misery reigned before."

This strange proceeding attracted vast assemblies, often reaching to *twenty thousand*, and came near overwhelming its projectors with excommunication; but it was an important measure for Methodism.

THE FIRST MEETING-HOUSE.

One result of it was the formation of a society in Bristol like the one in London. The object of their association was to build each other up in the faith of Christ, in order to which they agreed to meet together. But here was a difficulty: they had no place sufficiently large to accommodate them. This suggested the idea of building a room to accommodate such as wished to be present at the *preaching* as well as the society meetings, and accordingly the corner-stone of the first Methodist meeting-house the world ever saw was laid on Saturday, May 12, 1739.

The peculiar settlement of this house, and the circumstances which led to it and justified it, explain a feature in Methodist economy that has not been well understood. We will give Mr. Wesley's account of the matter in his own words. "I had not at first," says he, "the least apprehension or design of being personally engaged either in the expense of the work or in the direction of it, having

appointed eleven feoffees, on whom I supposed these burdens would fall, of course. But I quickly found my mistake, first, with regard to the expense, for the whole undertaking *must have stood still* had not I immediately taken upon myself the payment of all the workmen; so that, before I knew where I was, I had contracted a debt of more than a hundred and fifty pounds; and this I was to discharge how I could, the subscriptions of both societies not amounting to one-quarter of the sum. And as to the direction of the work, I presently received letters from my friends in London, Mr. Whitefield in particular, backed with a message by one just come from thence, that neither he nor they would have any thing to do with the building, nor contribute any thing toward it, unless I would instantly discharge all feoffees and do every thing in my own name. Many reasons they gave for this, but one was enough, namely, 'That such feoffees would always have it in their power to control *me*, and, if I preached not as they liked, to turn me out of the room I had built.' I accordingly yielded to their advice, and, calling all the feoffees together, canceled (no man opposing) the instruments made before, and took the whole management into my own hands. Money, it is true, I had not, nor any human prospect or probability of procuring it; but I knew 'the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof,' and in his name set out, nothing doubting."

THE PROGRESS AND MANNER OF THE WORK OF GOD.

From this time the work of God spread in every direction, triumphing over the prejudices and opposi-

tion of men of various ranks and conditions, and effecting such results on the hearts and lives of many as had never been seen before, and societies were formed in many places. Says Mr. Wesley:

“Such a work this hath been in many respects as neither we nor our fathers had known. Not a few whose sins were of the most *flagrant* kind—*drunkards, swearers, thieves, whoremongers, adulterers*—have been brought *from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God*. Many of these were rooted in their wickedness, having long gloried in their shame, perhaps for a course of many years, yea, even to hoary hairs. Many had not so much as a rational faith, being Jews, Arians, Deists, or Atheists. Nor has God only made bare his arm in these last days in behalf of open publicans and sinners, but many of the Pharisees also have believed on him—of the righteous that seemed to need no repentance—and, having received the sentence of death in themselves, have then heard the voice that raiseth the dead—have been made partakers of an inward, *vital religion*, even righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

“The *manner* wherein God hath wrought this work is as strange as the work itself. In any particular soul it has generally, if not always, been wrought in *one moment*. As the lightning shineth from heaven, so was the coming of the Son of man, either to bring peace or a sword; either to wound or to heal; either to convince of sin or to give remission of sins in his blood. And the other circumstances attending it have been equally remote from what human wisdom would have expected, so true

is that word, 'My ways are not as your ways, nor my thoughts as your thoughts.' These *extraordinary* circumstances seem to have been designed by God for the further manifestation of his work, to cause his power to be known, and to awaken the attention of a drowsy world."

Not satisfied to confine the Gospel within the limits of their own country, these pioneers visited Wales, then dead in trespasses and sins of every sort, where, finding the churches shut against them as at home, they preached Jesus in the streets and private dwellings with their usual power, and many were converted and united together to run the race set before them. Griffith Jones, a regular Welsh clergyman, co-operated with them. Howell Harris, also, a layman of that Church, exhorted and prayed among the poor, and established many societies, and did much good; but his own people resisted him, and refused him ordination to the last. He was too religious for the times. Persecution, extending to much violence, attended the progress of all these good men; but God was with them, and their work remains to this day.

LAY PREACHING RESISTED.

By this time Mr. Charles Wesley had overcome his scruples about preaching out of Church, and had joined with his brother and Mr. Whitefield in calling after sinners in the highways and hedges; but he was not a little annoyed by the attempt of a layman, a Mr. Bowers, to speak after he had closed, which was so palpable a breach of Church order that both he and Mr. Whitefield declared against it. The

necessity of such efforts had not yet appeared, nor had these men of God become so weaned from their Church notions as to countenance any divergence from canonical restrictions. This was the first attempt at lay preaching among them, and it met with so much opposition that Bowers soon confessed his error; but the spirit that throbbed in his bosom was destined to speak out.

SEPARATION FROM THE MORAVIANS AND THE ADOPTION
OF GENERAL RULES.

About this time (May 1, 1743) the society in London fell into dangerous errors by means of the Moravians, with whom they were associated. This led to an able discussion of the points of difference, and finally to the division of the society and the separation of Mr. Wesley from the Moravian body. Great efforts were made to heal the breach, but all in vain, and probably for the best. Though Wesley's *heart* was with the Moravians, his *judgment* was against reunion. He saw their weaknesses, and feared their influence. These differences, together with the multiplication of societies, suggested the importance of having some definite basis of union, which, while it should invite all serious persons to the highest privileges of the Gospel, would authorize the pastors of the flock to eject such from their fellowship as should prove themselves unworthy of confidence. This necessity was supplied by the adoption of a most excellent plan of procedure in London, Bristol, Kingswood, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, etc., entitled, "The General Rules of Our United Societies." (Wesley's Works, Vol. V, pp. 190-192.)

SEPARATION OF MR. WHITEFIELD.

Things now seemed to be settling into a more systematic and permanent state. The Wesleys were seeing eye to eye, as they had not always done. Mr. Whitefield and various others of the regular clergy were with them in spirit, and in effort, as far as it was practicable, in their different circumstances, and other appearances were flattering; but no slight shade was soon cast over their prospects by an occurrence the least anticipated. Mr. Whitefield departed from the faith. Having made a second tour in America, extending from August, 1739, to January, 1741, and been honored by all classes as no other minister ever was, particularly by the Calvinistic clergy, who greatly predominated in the colonies, he was overcome, and imbibed their sentiments. Of course, he could not heartily co-operate with Wesley as before, he being an Arminian, though he had established no doctrinal standard for his societies. The consequence was what might have been expected, namely, debate and alienation. As an honest man, Whitefield felt obliged to preach Calvinism, but did it, no doubt, in a good spirit; but some of his sympathizers thought it to be their duty to explode what they called the Arminian heresy in the little societies, contrary to the rules which forbade controversy, and they did so. The first trouble occurred in London, with one Acourt, whom Charles Wesley rejected. Appealing to his brother afterward, he asked, "Do you refuse to admit a person into your society only because he differs from you in opinion?" "What opinion do you mean?" inquired Wesley. "That of

election," answered Acourt, and added, "I hold a certain number is elected from eternity, and these must and shall be saved; and the rest of mankind must and shall be damned: and many of your society hold the same." "I never asked whether they hold it or no," replied Wesley; "only let them not trouble others by disputing about it." "Nay," answered Acourt, "but I will dispute about it; because you are all wrong, and I am resolved to set you all right." Being refused admission to the society for this purpose, he said, "Then I will go and tell all the world that you and your brethren are false prophets, and in one fortnight you will all be in confusion." (Wesley's Works, Vol. III, p. 185.)

"The disturbance which this opinion occasioned at Bristol, and the parts adjacent," says Mr. Moore, "was not so soon or so easily quieted. Mr. Wesley had permitted an excellent young man, Mr. Cennick, afterward a minister of the Moravian Church, to pray with and exhort the society at Kingswood, as well as to superintend the school during his absence. Mr. Cennick now embraced the doctrine of the decrees; and soon after seems to have lost all love and respect for his former friend, speaking against him and his doctrine with much contempt and bitterness. The consequence was that, after some fruitless efforts to heal the breach, Mr. Cennick departed, and carried off with him about *fifty* of the society, whom he formed into a separate connection. Mr. Wesley mourned over this young man in such a manner as evinced that he held him in high esteem."

Fearing nothing for the cause, and especially from contention, all things being *ordained* from everlasting,

those who sympathized with Mr. Whitefield improved every opportunity to make converts to their new opinions. This occasioned no little disquietude. If the doctrines of Whitefield and his followers were true, Methodism must be false. Being diametrically opposed to each other, both could not be true.

To meet the emergency, Mr. Wesley printed a sermon on Predestination, exposing the absurdity of the particular views contended for by the Calvinists. This gave considerable offense, and led to a separation of the two parties, an event much to be regretted in many respects; but which, considering the doctrinal differences existing among them, was indispensable to success. The truth is, the two systems are antagonistic to each other. It is not possible to harmonize them. One of them is essentially false, and can not co-operate with the other without creating a controversy. This is true, whether we look at the subject in the light of facts, philosophy, or religion. And hence we regard all attempts to effect an amalgamation of religious elements, thus radically discordant, as worse than in vain. The *best*, we believe, that can be done in such cases, is that which Wesley and Whitefield (bating the use of some few emphatic expressions) did; namely: to *separate*, and work out their respective systems; but still, so to love each other, and the cause of God, as to rejoice in each other's success in winning souls to Christ.

This, these two men of God did in a high degree. True, they spake perhaps too plainly to each other, in a few letters that passed between them; but, after all, they loved as brethren; and Mr. Wesley closed the controversy by saying, "How easy it were for

me to hit many other palpable blots, in that which you call an answer to my sermon! And how above measure contemptible would you then appear to all men, either of sense or learning? But I spare you; mine hand shall not be upon you. The Lord be judge between me and thee! The general tenor both of my public and private exhortations, when I touch thereon at all, as even my enemies know, if they would testify, is, '*Spare the young man, even Absalom, for my sake.*'"

How kindly these remarks were received is indicated by the following words, in a letter from Mr. Whitefield, written some months after: "I long to hear from you, and write this hoping to have an answer. I rejoice to hear the Lord blesses your labors. May you be blessed in bringing souls to Christ more and more! I believe we shall go on best when we only preach the simple Gospel, and do not interfere with each other's plan. Brother Charles has been pleased to come and see me twice. Behold, what a happy thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! That the whole Christian world may all become of one heart and one mind; and that *we*, in particular, though differing in judgment, may be examples of mutual, fervent, undissembled affection, is the hearty prayer of, reverend and dear sir, your most affectionate, though most unworthy, younger brother in the kingdom and patience of Jesus."

This letter was answered in the same brotherly spirit, and the mutual regard of these excellent men suffered no diminution to the last. So that Mr. Whitefield found it in his heart to record in his last

will and testament, "I leave a mourning ring to my honored and dear friends, and distinguished fellow-laborers, the Rev. Messrs. John and Charles Wesley, in token of my indissoluble union with them, in heart and Christian affection, notwithstanding our difference in judgment about some particular points of doctrine." Under the impulse of the same feeling, he often expressed a wish to have Mr. Wesley preach his funeral sermon, should he die first. And he did so, giving a full proof of profound love for the partner of his youthful conflicts.

THE FIRST LAY PREACHER.

Another *necessity*, arising from the growing state of the societies, was now manifest. Mr. Wesley's desire was that the established clergy should watch over such as he and his associates had brought to repentance, and encourage them in faith and practice, as their spiritual interests required. But most of them did no such thing. They acted more like *wolves* than *shepherds*, ridiculing their religion, repelling them from the Lord's table, and otherwise hindering rather than helping them. The result was, many turned back to the world, and plunged into sin.

How to remedy this difficulty was a serious question. Every society needed a pastor; but the pastors were few, and these must travel all over the kingdom. This suggested the appointment of some layman, of deep piety and sound judgment in divine things, to meet the others and confirm them, by reading, conversation, and prayer, as he might be able. No other plan seemed at all practicable, and this would not always serve well, for the want of the

right style of men, as we have seen in the case of Mr. Cennick, who was one of the first whom Mr. Wesley honored with his special confidence, and the *very first* to divide the society and set up an independent meeting.

The society in London had suffered much by false teaching, and been considerably scattered. Therefore, as Mr. Wesley was about to leave the city, he appointed a young man, a Mr. Maxfield, whom he considered sound in the faith, to meet it at the usual times, and, by such means as were suitable for a layman, to encourage the members to stand fast. Being fervent in spirit, and mighty in the Scriptures, he pleased and profited the people greatly, and demonstrated the wisdom of the lay pastorate involved in this novel scheme.

But Providence had designs beyond the mere benefit of the little flock. The talent and energy of Maxfield attracted many to his meetings, whose attention indicated that they were a people prepared for the Lord. This led him out further than he at first designed or than was consistent with the prevailing notions of Church Order at that time. He began to *preach*. But notwithstanding the measure was not approved by the Established Church, the Lord blessed it, and many were deeply awakened and brought to the joyful knowledge of the truth. This, however, did not justify the "*irregularity*" in the esteem of some. There are individuals in most places who hold Church Order above every other consideration. God must work by their rules, and sinners be converted in their way, if at all, or there will be trouble. So it was in this case. While not a few rejoiced in the

glorious results of this strange innovation, many trembled for the honor of the priestly office, and complaint was rife on all sides.

Mr. Wesley being directly informed of the disorder, hastened to London to arrest it. But before he saw Mr. Maxfield, the timely advice of his ever considerate and pious mother moderated his displeasure, and suggested the propriety of an examination, which at first was not thought necessary. Seeing, on his arrival, that something troubled him, she inquired what it was; to which he abruptly replied, "Thomas Maxfield has turned preacher, I find." Looking him attentively in the face, "John," said she, "you know what my sentiments have been. You can not suspect me of favoring readily any thing of this kind. But take care what you do with respect to that young man, for he is as surely called of God to preach as you are. Examine what have been the fruits of his preaching, and hear him for yourself." He did so, and was constrained to say, "*It is the Lord. Let him do what seemeth to him good.*"

"In other places, also," says the biographer of Mr. Wesley, "the same assistance was afforded." But he submitted to it with reluctance. His High Church principles stood in his way. But such effects were produced, he frequently found himself in the condition of Peter, who, being questioned in a matter somewhat similar, could only relate the fact, and say, "*What was I, that I could withstand God?*"

JOHN NELSON STRANGELY CALLED.

But the Lord was about to show him greater things than these. An honest man, a mason, of Bristol, in

Yorkshire, whose name was John Nelson, coming up to London to work at his trade, heard that word which he found to be the "*power of God unto salvation.*" Nelson had full business in London and large wages. But from the time of making his peace with God, it was continually on his mind that he must return to his native place. He did so about Christmas. His relations and acquaintances soon began to inquire "what he thought of this 'new faith?' And whether he believed there was any such thing as a man's knowing that his sins were forgiven?" John told them, point blank, "That this new faith, as they called it, was the 'old faith of the Gospel;' and that he himself was as sure that his sins were forgiven as he could be of the shining of the sun." This was soon noised abroad, and more and more came to inquire concerning these strange things. Some put him upon the proofs of the great truths which such inquiries naturally led him to mention. And thus he was brought unawares to quote, explain, compare, and enforce several parts of Scripture. This he did, at first sitting in his house, till the company increased so that the house could not contain them. Then he stood at the door, which he was commonly obliged to do in the evening, as soon as he came from work. God immediately set his seal to what was spoken; and several believed, and therefore declared in the midst of the people that God was merciful also to their unrighteousness, and had forgiven all their sins.

Here was a preacher, and a large congregation, many of whom were soundly converted, without the direct agency of Mr. Wesley; but he fully acquiesced

in the work, and rejoiced that the thoughts of God were not as his thoughts.

Thus we see the origin of lay preaching, to which Methodism, and through it the Christian world, is so much indebted. Who that is not blinded by Popish notions of apostolic succession can fail to see that it was a divine conception, and owes its existence to the direct appointment of Providence? Though the ministry has greatly increased since, it has not yet superseded the necessity of this appliance, because the people have increased also, and, after all, there are fields of ministerial usefulness to be occupied that it is not in the power of the regular clergy of all the denominations to supply. But more of this hereafter.

LEANINGS TOWARD THE MORAVIANS COUNTERACTED.

This new development introduced Mr. Wesley to Yorkshire, where he labored much, and where religion has taken deeper root than in almost any other part of England. It opened the way also to other fields, and gave a new impetus to the work. But the day of trials was not past. Since Mr. Wesley's separation from the Moravians, some of his old friends had left him and gone over to them; but what was most painful of all, his brother Charles manifested strong tendencies in the same direction. This was a source of profound sorrow. But still he trusted in the Lord, having no separate interest to promote, and wrote his brother a pathetic letter, in which we find these words: "O! my brother, my soul is grieved for you; the poison is in you; fair words have stolen away your heart. 'No English man or woman is like the Moravians!' So the matter is come to a fair

issue. Five of us did stand together a few months since, but two are gone to the right hand (Hutchins and Cennick), and two more to the left (Mr. Hall and you). Lord, if it be thy Gospel which I preach, arise and maintain thine own cause."

This letter took effect, and brought his brother more fully into union with himself, and into the itinerant work. He immediately proceeded to Oxford, and from thence to Gloucester, and elsewhere, preaching Jesus in various places, but chiefly in the highways and hedges, from Whitefield's pulpit—the stone wall; and thousands flocked to hear him, upon whom God wrought with power. Convictions were often quick and distressing, and conversions sudden and clear as the meridian sun. To show that God is no respecter of person or rank, the work extended to all grades of society, if we except those of the highest fashion and folly, who generally avoid the Gospel altogether, but won its greatest conquests among the laboring classes. The poor colliers especially drank deep at the fountain of life, and manifested the most astonishing improvement that grace ever produced. "June 22d," says Mr. Wesley, "I went again to learn Christ among our colliers, and drink into their spirit. We rejoiced for the consolation. God knows their poverty; but they are rich, and daily entering into his rest. They do not hold it necessary to deny weak faith in order to get strong. Their souls truly wait upon God in his ordinances. Ye many masters, come learn Christ of these outcasts; for know that, except ye be converted, and become like these little children, ye can not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

THE POWER OF THE "NEW RELIGION."

The new religion also gave its subjects wonderful victory over death. Speaking of a sister Hooper, says Mr. Wesley: "I asked her whether she was not in great pain. 'Yes,' she answered, 'but in greater joy. I would not be without either.' 'But do you not prefer either life or death?' She replied: 'All is alike to me. Let Christ choose; I have no will of my own.' I spoke with her physician, who said he had little hope of her recovery; 'only,' he added, 'she has no dread upon her spirits, which is generally the worst symptom. Most people die for fear of dying; but I never met with such people as yours. They are none of them afraid of death, but calm and patient and resigned to the last.'"

DEATH OF MRS. SUSANNA WESLEY.

The agency of this noble woman in laying the foundation of Methodism entitles her to everlasting remembrance. As we have seen, her sons were rigid Churchmen, and not only stuck fast to the Establishment, but carefully resisted any thing like innovation upon its arrangements. The first attempt at lay speaking in public, Charles quashed at once. John would have suppressed Maxfield as promptly, had not his pious mother interposed with timely and prudent counsel. This saved Methodism in that moment of danger, for that was the hinge on which the fortunes of the day turned.

She was equally useful on other occasions. Spending her last days with him at the Foundery, she spared no pains to aid him in every emergency.

July 23, 1742, she finished her honored course, when her children gathered about her bed and sung a psalm, according to her dying request. August 1st, they laid her by the side of her venerated husband, in the presence of an "innumerable company." Mr. Wesley afterward preached on the words, "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God," etc., "to one of the most solemn assemblies," he says, "I ever saw or expect to see this side eternity."

CHAPTER IV.

THE PERSONAL SACRIFICES OF THE LEADERS—NEW DEVICES
AND VIOLENT PERSECUTIONS.

NO one who properly considers the worldly prospects of the founders of Methodism, had they pursued the ordinary course of professional men, can for a moment question their sincerity. Dr. Whitehead, who wrote to disparage them, paid them a high compliment in spite of his deep-seated prejudice, when contemplating the wonderful effects of their unrequited labors. "Viewing itinerant preaching in this light," he says, "we see its importance, and must acknowledge that the authors of it deserve great praise, especially as they introduced it by their own example, under great difficulties and hardships. Their prospects in life, from their learning, their abilities, and their rank in society, were all sacrificed to the plan of itinerancy. They had every thing to lose by it—reputation, health, and the esteem of their friends—and nothing in this world to gain but great bodily fatigue, ill usage from the mob, and general contempt; and, as only three persons united together in the plan, they could not expect to form any extensive or permanent establishment. It is evident from their writings that these three servants of God did not look to any distant consequences of their proceedings. They contented themselves with doing

as much good as possible in the way which opened before them; and they truly labored, also, for their own continuance in the faith, knowing that unfaithfulness to their calling would impair, and in the issue destroy it."

ORIGIN OF CLASS-MEETINGS.

This brings us to consider another necessity of the cause, and its supply. Mr. Wesley had been induced to form his followers into societies from observing that where they were *not* thus formed they soon relapsed into their former habits; and the experiment showed the wisdom of the measure. A little reflection also convinced him that this was the very course pursued from the beginning of Christianity. He had been constrained to preach in the highways and other unconsecrated places by the closing of the churches against him, and had felt compelled to allow pious laymen to exhort, and even *preach*, by the refusal of the regular clergy to watch over the souls of inquirers and give them such instructions as they needed.

But still there were frequent defections which brought great scandal upon the cause, and yet no remedy appeared. "At length," Mr. Wesley remarks, "while we were thinking of quite another thing, we struck upon a method for which we have cause to bless God ever since. I was talking with several of the society in Bristol concerning the means of paying the debts there, when one stood up and said, 'Let every member of the society give a *penny* a week till all are paid.' Another answered, 'But many are poor and can not afford to do it.' 'Then,'

said he, 'put eleven of the poorest with me, and, if they can give any thing, well. I will call on them weekly, and, if they can give nothing, I will give for them as well as for myself; and each of you can call on eleven of your neighbors weekly, receive what they give, and make up what is wanting.' It was done. In a while some of these informed me 'they found such and such a one did not live as he ought.' It struck me immediately, 'This is the thing, the very thing, we have wanted so long.' I called together all the leaders of the classes [so they called the collectors], and desired that each would make a particular inquiry into the behavior of those whom he saw weekly. They did so. Many disorderly walkers were detected. Some turned from the evil of their ways; some were put away from us. Many saw it with fear, and rejoiced unto God with reverence."

The same arrangement was soon adopted in London, and in all the other societies, with the happiest effect. Each leader was required to see every member of his class once a week, at least, to inquire after the prosperity of their souls; to advise, reprove, or exhort, as it was found necessary; to receive what they were disposed to give, and to meet the minister, and stewards, etc., as at the present time. But at first the leaders visited the members at their own houses. This was soon found to be inconvenient, and, in some cases, impracticable. Hence, it was agreed that the members of each class should meet together once a week, and the leader was required to visit only those who might be absent. So much for the origin of *our classes*.

WATCH-MEETINGS—HOW ORIGINATED.

About this time intelligence reached Mr. Wesley that the brethren at Kingswood had fallen into the practice of occasionally spending the greater part of the night in prayer and praise. At the same time he was advised to put an end to it, as a disorder that could not be tolerated without danger to the cause. But the fact that it was a new measure was not sufficient to satisfy him that it might not be right and useful, nor the other fact that it was opposed. He took time, therefore, to “weigh the thing thoroughly,” and finding a practice among the early Christians of much the same character, he could not persuade himself to forbid it. For the sake of obtaining fuller information as to the meetings themselves, he sent word to the brethren that he would watch with them on the Friday nearest the full moon. He did so, preaching at eight or nine, and continuing the exercises a little beyond midnight, praying and praising God amid a throng of spectators. The effect was good. God so wrought by this means that it was introduced in other places, and continued once a month for a long time. Some of the opposers thought the effect attributable to the novelty of the thing, or, perhaps to the silence of the night, to which Mr. Wesley wisely replied: “I am not careful to answer in this matter. Be it so. However, the impression then made on many souls has never since been effaced. Now, allowing that God did make use of either the novelty or any other indifferent circumstance, in order to bring sinners to repentance, yet they are brought; and herein let us rejoice together.”

Thus, our *watch-meetings* originated, like lay preaching, in what was regarded the excessive zeal of individuals; and though by no means as serviceable to the cause, they have no doubt proved an efficient auxiliary in saving souls from death.

ORIGIN AND OBJECT OF QUARTERLY TICKETS.

It was about this time also that another custom was started; namely, the giving of quarterly tickets to the faithful of the flock. It happened on this wise: as the society increased, Mr. Wesley saw the necessity of greater care to separate the precious from the vile; and determined to converse with each member once in three months personally. In carrying this purpose into effect, it occurred that it might be well for him to give such as he found walking in the truth some testimonial of character and connection with the society. For this purpose he prepared a ticket, which, being publicly explained, had all the form of a full length recommendation. Those who bore these *tesserae*, as the ancients called them, were acknowledged by their brethren of other societies, and received with cordiality. They also found ready access to all the society meetings; while those whose conduct had been such as to render them unworthy of receiving the quarterly tickets were excluded.

The practice thus started has been of excellent service in more ways than one. Though it has not been rigidly carried out, particularly in this country, it is, nevertheless, among our regulations, and will vary in its application and utility just as the ministry varies in its pastoral fidelity. Originating in an effort to be more critical in watching over the flock, and defend-

ing it from the corrupting influence of unworthy characters, it will always be found useful in the execution of this holy design.

BAND-MEETINGS—HOW AND WHY STARTED.

The same grand pursuit suggested the *band-meetings* also. Many were anxious for a more intimate union. They had conflicts which it would not be proper to detail in a promiscuous society, but in relation to which they needed counsel no less than on other points. "In compliance with their desire," says Mr. Wesley, "I divided them into smaller companies; putting the married or single men, and married or single women, together. In order to increase in them a grateful sense of all the mercies of the Lord, I desired that one evening in a quarter they should all come together, that we might "*eat bread* (as the ancient Christians did) *with gladness and singleness of heart.*" This was the origin of *love-feasts*, which still survive among us.

Thus we see that these peculiarities of Methodism were of providential origin, springing out of the spiritual necessities of the pious, and of perishing sinners. There seems to have been no planning, no human ingenuity, no speculation. Mr. Wesley's plans were the *plans of the Episcopal Church*. He *knew* no other, he *wanted* no other, till the necessity appeared, and the measure stood up before him like a real *presence*; and then he adopted it for the sake of the cause, though in doing so he had to depart from a long-cherished system of operations, to which he had adhered with undeviating tenacity, until he was born of the Spirit.

THE WORK STARTING IN GERMANY.

He had now a number of helpers after his own heart, besides many class and band leaders, whose services were indispensable to his benevolent designs. The preaching of the Word was with power. It was generally extemporaneous, and directly adapted to the circumstances of the people, as the sermons of other clergy were not. The hearers, even the low and despised, listened with astonishment, and made haste to "repent and be converted." Several soldiers of the British army, whom the Holy Spirit had conquered, going into Germany, began to preach Jesus to the army, and great was the power of God that attended them.

Mr. Haime, writing to Mr. Wesley, says: "We remained in this camp eight days, and then removed to a place called Arsk. Here I began to speak openly at a small distance from the camp, just in the middle of the English army. We sung a hymn, which drew about two hundred soldiers together, and they all behaved decently. After I had prayed, I began to exhort them; and, though it rained, very few went away. Many acknowledged the truth; in particular a young man, John Greenwood, who has kept with me ever since, and whom God has lately been pleased to give me for a fellow-laborer. Our society is now increased to upward of two hundred, and the hearers are frequently more than a thousand; although many say I am mad, and others have endeavored to incense the field marshal against us. I have been sent for and examined several times. But, blessed be God, he has always delivered me."

One of his hearers, who cried out to his comrades to "*come away*, and not hear that fool any longer," received an arrow to his heart, and "roared out in the bitterness of his soul," till God turned his heaviness into joy.

JOHN EVANS'S CONVERSION.

John Evans wrote of this same *divine*: "I believed myself a very good Christian till we came to Winter-quarters, where I met with John Haime. But I was soon sick of his company: for he robbed me of my treasures; he stole away my gods, telling me I and my works were going to hell together. This was strong doctrine to me. When the Lord had opened my eyes, and shown me that by grace we are saved through faith,' I began immediately to declare it to others, though I had not as yet experienced it myself. But October 23d, as William Clements was at prayer, I felt on a sudden a great alteration in my soul. My eyes overflowed with tears of love. I knew I was through Christ reconciled to God; which inflamed my soul with fervent love to him, whom I now saw to be my complete Redeemer. O, the tender care of Almighty God in bringing up his children!"

OPPOSITION TO THE WORK.

But it must not be imagined that this growing cause was not opposed. The spirit that christened its early friends "*Methodist*," at Oxford, found sympathy in other places. The clergy generally threw themselves directly in the way, and exerted their influence against it. They had refused the preachers the use of their pulpits, and otherwise treated them

as heretics and vagabonds. The drunken vicar of Epworth, denied Mr. Wesley the privilege of preaching in the church of his native place, where his father had been rector for many years, and therefore he preached on his father's tombstone to such a congregation as Epworth had never seen. He did this daily for a week, and repeated the effort afterward. The members in many places, though correct in life and filled with the Spirit, had been repelled from the sacrament, while infidels and swearers, and almost every other kind of carnal and wicked men, had been admitted without objection. Sermons had been preached denouncing the whole fraternity as a pestilent concern, that ought not be tolerated; and from the bishops down to their lowest clerical vassals, there was a hue and cry of hostility, not very dissimilar to that raised by the Scribes and Pharisees, under the ministrations of Jesus of Nazareth.

With such an example in the house of God, among the *priests* themselves, it was not difficult to predict a storm from without, which would have no limits, except such as God might be pleased to interpose. And so it came to pass. The new sect being every-where spoken against by people of rank and religion, the tools by which they execute their nefarious and illegal will,—the rabble,—pursued them from place to place with sword in hand, and, but for the protection of Omnipotence would have hurled them to oblivion.

In London, the society was often attacked with showers of stones; and once an attempt was made to unroof the Foundery where they were assembled; and for some time there seemed to be no redress.

In the beginning of 1743 Mr. Wesley visited Wednesbury, where, in the course of three months, so powerful was the work of God, a society was formed, consisting of some three or four hundred members. But Satan came also among them. The minister of the place, with several *justices*, stirred up the baser sort of people to outrages of the grossest kind. "Mobs were summoned together by the sound of the horn; men, women, and children, were abused in the most shocking manner, being beaten, stoned, and covered with mud. Women in delicate circumstances were treated in a manner that can not be mentioned. In the mean time, their houses were broken open by any that pleased, and their goods spoiled or carried away; some of the owners standing by, but not daring to oppose, as it would have been at the peril of their lives."

MR. WESLEY MOBBED.

We have room to narrate the circumstances of only one or two mobs, among the hundreds which the infant Church was called to endure. But these sufficiently indicate the ferocity of the enemies, and the kind intervention of Divine Providence, to give some idea of what early Methodism had to withstand, and the help she obtained. We give the account in Mr. Wesley's own words. The scene of the transactions was Wednesbury, where he preached in the open air, at twelve o'clock. He says:

"I was writing at Francis Ward's in the afternoon, when the cry arose that 'the mob had beset the house.' We prayed that God would disperse them. And it was so; so that in half an hour not a man was left. I told our brethren, 'Now is the

time for us to go;' but they pressed me exceedingly to stay. So, that I might not offend them, I sat down, though I foresaw what would follow. Before five, the mob surrounded the house again, in greater numbers than ever. The cry of one and all was, 'Bring out the minister; we *will* have the minister.' I desired one to take their captain by the hand and bring him into the house. After a few sentences interchanged between us, the lion was become a lamb. I desired him to go and bring one or two of the most angry of his companions. He brought in two who were ready to swallow the ground with rage; but in two minutes they were as calm as he. I then bade them make way, that I might go out among the people. As soon as I was in the midst of them I called for a chair, and, standing up, asked, 'What do any of you want with me?' Some said, 'We want you to go with us to the Justice.' I replied, 'That I will with all my heart!' I then spoke a few words, which God applied; so that they cried out with might and main, 'The gentleman is an honest gentleman, and we will spill our blood in his defense!' I asked, 'Shall we go to the Justice to-night or in the morning?' Most of them cried, 'To-night! to-night!' On which, I went before, and two or three hundred followed.

"The night came before we had walked a mile, together with heavy rain. However, on we went to Bentley Hall, two miles from Wednesbury. One or two ran before, to tell Mr. Lane, 'they had brought Mr. Wesley before his worship.' Mr. Lane replied, 'What have I to do with Mr. Wesley? Go and carry him back again.' By this time the main body came up, and began knocking at the door. A servant told them, 'Mr. Lane was in bed.' His son followed, and asked, 'What is the matter?' One replied, 'Why, an't please you, they sing psalms all day; nay, and make folks rise at five in the morning. And what would your worship advise us to do?' 'To go home,' said Mr. Lane, 'and be quiet.'

"Here they were at a full stop, till one advised 'to go to Justice Persehouse, at Walsal.' All agreed to this. So we hastened on, and about seven came to his house. But Mr. Persehouse likewise sent word that 'he was in bed.' Now they were at a stand again; but at last they all thought it the wisest course to make the best of their way home. About fifty of them undertook to convoy me. But we had not gone a hundred yards when the mob of Walsal came pouring in like a

flood, and bore down all before them. The Darlaston mob made what defense they could; but they were weary as well as outnumbered. So that, in a short time, many being knocked down, the rest ran away, and left me in their hands.

"To attempt speaking was vain; for the noise on every side was like the roaring of the sea. So they dragged me along till we came to the town; where, seeing the door of a large house open, I attempted to go in; but a man catching me by the hair, pulled me back into the middle of the mob. They made no more stop till they had carried me through the main street. I continued speaking all the time to those within hearing, feeling no pain or weariness. At the west end of the town, seeing a door half open, I made toward it, and would have gone in; but a gentleman in the shop would not suffer me, saying, 'they would pull the house down to the ground.' However, I stood at the door, and asked, 'Are you willing to hear me speak?' Many cried out, 'No, no! knock his brains out! down with him! kill him at once!' Others said, 'Nay; but we will hear him first!' I began asking, 'What evil have I done? Which of you all have I wronged in word or deed?' and continued speaking above a quarter of an hour, till my voice suddenly failed. Then the floods began to lift up their voice again; many crying out, 'Bring him away! Bring him away!'

"In the mean time, my strength and my voice returned, and I broke out aloud into prayer. And now the man who just before headed the mob, turned and said, 'Sir, I will spend my life for you. Follow me, and not one soul here shall touch a hair of your head.' Two or three of his fellows confirmed his words, and got close to me immediately. At the same time the gentleman in the shop cried out, 'For shame! For shame! Let him go!' An honest butcher, who was a little farther off, said 'it was a shame they should do thus;' and pulled back four or five, one after another, who were running on the most fiercely. The people then, as if it had been by common consent, fell back to the right and left; while those three or four men took me between them, and carried me through them all. But, on the bridge, the mob rallied again; we therefore went on one side, over the mill-dam, and thence through the meadows, till, a little before ten, God brought me safe to Wednesbury; having lost only one flap of my waistcoat, and a little skin from one of my hands.

"I never saw such a chain of providences before; so many convincing proofs that the hand of God is on every person and thing, overruling as it seemeth him good.

"A poor woman in Darlaston, who had headed that mob, and sworn 'that none should touch me,' when she saw her fellows give way, ran into the thickest of the throng, and knocked down three or four men, one after another. But many assaulting her at once, she was soon overpowered, and had probably been killed in a few minutes (three or four men keeping her down, and beating her with all their might), had not a man called out to them, 'Hold, Tom, hold!' 'Who is there?' said Tom. 'What, honest Munchin? Nay, then, let her go.' So they held their hands, and let her get up and crawl home as well as she could.

"From the beginning to the end, I found the same presence of mind as if I had been sitting in my study. But I took no thought for one moment before another; only once it came into my mind, that if they should throw me into the river, it would spoil the papers that were in my pocket. For myself, I did not doubt but I should swim across, having but a thin coat and a light pair of boots.

"By how gentle degrees does God prepare us for his will! Two years ago, a piece of brick grazed my shoulders. It was a year after that a stone struck me between the eyes. Last month, I received one blow; and this evening two—one before we came into town, and one after we were gone out. But both were as nothing; for, though one man struck me on the breast with all his might, and the other on the mouth with such force that the blood gushed out immediately, I felt no more pain from either of the blows than if they had touched me with a straw.

"It ought not to be forgotten that, when the rest of the society made all haste to escape for their lives, four only would not stir,—William Sitch, Edward Slater, John Griffiths, and Joan Parks. These kept with me, resolving to live or die together. And none of them received one blow but William Sitch, who held me by the arm from one end of the town to the other. He was then dragged away and knocked down; but he soon rose and got to me again. I afterward asked him, 'what he expected when the mob came upon us?' He said, 'To die for him who had died for us;' and added, 'that he felt no hurry or fear, but calmly waited till God should require his soul of him.'"

At St. Ives, Mr. Wesley was roughly handled, and the preaching-house was pulled down to the ground; but we will mention only the particulars of his visit to Falmouth, which we find stated in his Journal.

"*Thursday, July 4th.*—I rode to Falmouth. About three in the afternoon I went to see a gentlewoman who had been indisposed. Almost as soon as I sat down, the house was beset on all sides by an innumerable multitude of people. A louder or more confused noise could hardly be at the taking of a city by storm. At first, Mrs. B. and her daughter endeavored to quiet them; but it was labor lost. They might as well have attempted to still the raging of the sea, and were, therefore, soon glad to shift for themselves. The rabble roared with all their throats, 'Bring out the *Canorum!* Where is the *Canorum!*' (an unmeaning word which the Cornish rabble then used instead of *Methodist*.) No answer being given, they quickly forced open the outer door, and filled the passage. Only a wainscot partition was between us, which was not likely to stand long. I immediately took down a large looking-glass which hung against it, supposing the whole side would fall in at once. They began their work with abundance of bitter imprecations. A poor girl who was left in the house was utterly astonished, and cried out, 'O, sir, what must we do?' I said, 'We must pray.' Indeed, at that time, to all appearance, our lives were not worth an hour's purchase. She asked, 'But, sir, is it not better for you to hide yourself? To get into the closet?' I answered, 'No. It is best for me to stand just where I am.' Among those without were the crews of some privateers which were lately come into the harbor. Some of these, being angry at the slowness of the rest, thrust them away, and coming up altogether, set their shoulders to the inner door, and cried out, 'Avast, lads, avast!' Away went all the hinges at once, and the door fell back into the room. I stepped forward into the midst of them, and said, 'Here I am. Which of you has any thing to say to me? To which of you have I done any wrong? To you? Or you? Or you?' I continued speaking till I came into the middle of the street, and then, raising my voice, said, 'Neighbors, countrymen, do you desire to hear me speak?'

They cried vehemently, 'Yes, yes, he shall speak. He shall. Nobody shall hinder him.' But having nothing to stand on, and no advantage of ground, I could be heard by a few only. However, I spoke without intermission; and, as far as the sound reached, the people were still, till one or two of their captains turned about and swore; 'Not a man shall touch him.' Mr. Thomas, a clergyman, then came up, and asked, 'Are you not ashamed to use a stranger thus?' He was soon seconded by two or three gentlemen of the town, and one of the aldermen, with whom I walked down the town, speaking all the time, till I came to Mrs. Maddern's house. The gentlemen proposed sending for my horse to the door, and desired me to step in and rest in the mean time. But, on second thoughts, they judged it not advisable to let me go out among the people again. So they chose to send my horse before me to Penryn, and to send me thither by water; the sea running close by the back door of the house in which we were.

"I never saw before, no, not at Walsal itself, the hand of God so plainly shown as here. *There* I had some companions, who were willing to die with me; *here*, not a friend, but one simple girl, who likewise was hurried away from me in an instant, as soon as ever she came out of Mrs. B's. house. *There*, I received some blows, lost part of my clothes, and was covered over with dirt. *Here*, although the hands of perhaps some hundreds of people were lifted up to strike or throw, they were one and all stopped in the midway, so that not a man touched me with one of his fingers. Neither was any thing thrown from first to last, so that I had not even a speck of dirt on my clothes. Who can deny that God heareth the prayer? or that he hath all power in heaven and earth?"

Charles Wesley, also John Nelson and other preachers experienced the most terrible trials of this sort at various times and places—clergymen "*treat-ing*" the rabble and urging them on in their murderous work; but God overruled the wrath of man for the advancement of his cause.

It was about this time that the country was threatened with invasion by France and Spain.

Wesley was accused of being in collusion with the Papists—of being a *Jesuit*—of keeping *priests* at his house in London; indeed, of all sorts of sins, and was arrested and imprisoned. Charles, too, was indicted for asking God in prayer to “call home his banished ones,” it being supposed that he meant the “House of the Stuarts.” Nelson and other preachers were impressed into the army, and outraged beyond description. The magistrates were of a piece with their priests. One delivered a member of the society over to the mob shouting “Hurrah, boys! Well done! Stand up for the Church!”

Mobs and civil prosecutions, however, were among the least obstructions to the work. They begat sympathy, which, though it was not able to repel them, operated in other ways, and under other circumstances, with good effect. Popular derision presented a much more effective resistance to the cause, and accompanied with every other species of opposition which learning, wealth, prejudice, and power can give, formed the mighty current that the Wesleyan movement had to resist. Nevertheless, by the peculiar blessing of heaven, it advanced with accumulating energy, achieving reforms among the lower classes that had been regarded utterly impracticable.

OTHER EXCITING SCENES.

That three such men as the Wesleys and Whitefield should attract public attention is not remarkable. Endowed by nature, education, and especially by the Holy Ghost, it was impossible for them to speak without making an impression. But there were extraordinary results attending their labors,

which can not be accounted for on any principles of human philosophy. Men and women in large numbers fell to the ground under the quiet expository preaching of Mr. Wesley as if dead or crying for mercy. And when their maddened friends came to take them away, *they* fell in like manner. *Blasphemers* were often overwhelmed, and cried aloud, as if dropping into hell. One man passing by, only stopping for a moment to hear the sermon, was struck down. A man of high Church affinities, who thought the devil was at the bottom of the movement, was induced to read one of Wesley's sermons, and fell in his own house screaming with anguish; but he arose rejoicing in God. Even a Quaker, who felt moved to protest against these extravagances, fell to the ground in the midst of his speech. Had these and hundreds of similar events occurred under Mr. Whitefield's preaching they might have been attributed to his terrific and impassioned eloquence, but he was not there. On his second return from America (July, 1739), Mr. Wesley told him of them, and he had many doubts; but "the next day," says Wesley, "he had an opportunity of informing himself better, for no sooner had he begun to invite all sinners to believe in Christ, than four persons sunk down close to him, almost in the same moment. One of them lay without either sense or motion. The third had strong convulsions all over his body, but made no noise, unless by groans. The fourth, equally convulsed, called upon God with strong cries and tears. From this time I trust we shall all suffer God to carry on his own work in the way that pleaseth him." (Wesley's Works, Vol. III, page 144.)

CHAPTER V

THE PROGRESS OF THE WORK—THE FIRST CONFERENCE,
WITH THE TRIALS AND TRIUMPHS WHICH FOLLOWED.

THE brothers were now fully devoted to the itinerant work, preaching every-where, as Providence opened the way, some three or four times Sundays, and nearly every day during the week. John Nelson, Thomas Maxfield, and other lay preachers were doing excellent service, while a few of the regular clergy favored the movement as far as they could without being ostracized. David Taylor, a servant of Lord Huntingdon, became converted, and spoke to his master's tenants and others with marked effect. Going abroad preaching under the direction of the countess in the open air, he drew together vast crowds of the common people, who heard him gladly. Samuel Deacon, led by curiosity, fell into the current and was converted, and became a distinguished preacher. All went from place to place, as the way opened and as Mr. Wesley directed.

But as the preachers multiplied and the work spread, it became necessary to adopt some *system* by which their labors should be turned to the best account. To effect so difficult a task in a way not to disturb the unity of the body, and at the same time secure the greatest possible efficiency, Mr. Wesley invited a number of the clergy to meet him for con-

sultation. The meeting was held in London, June 25, 1744, at the Foundry, in connection with which Mr. Wesley had a house that he called his home, where he received his venerated and widowed mother and entertained her during the remainder of her useful life. This meeting has since been recognized as

THE FIRST CONFERENCE.

It consisted of six clergymen of the Church of England, to-wit: John Wesley, Charles Wesley, John Hodges, Henry Piers, Samuel Taylor, and John Meriton. It is assumed by Dr. Stevens that there were also present four lay preachers, which is not unlikely, though Mr. Wesley makes no mention of them in his account of the occasion. (See his Works, Vol. V, p. 194.) The meeting continued five days, and was occupied, first of all, in prayer to God for his guidance and blessing, and then in the consideration of the great doctrinal and practical questions particularly involved in their enterprise.

That they might come to right conclusions, it was desired that all should have a single eye, and be as little children, having every thing to learn; that every point should be examined to the foundation; that each should speak whatever was in his heart till every question should be thoroughly debated and settled. This being premised, the order of the meeting was stated to be to consider, 1. What to teach; 2. How to teach; and, 3. What to do—that is, how to regulate our doctrine, discipline, and practice—whereupon they proceeded step by step in the form of conversation, beginning with the doctrine of *justification*, till they had agreed upon most of the

great principles which constitute the framework and strength of the different branches of Methodism throughout the world. (Wesley's Works, Vol. V, p. 194.)

With an improved acquaintance with each other, and a better understanding of and a stronger attachment to the doctrines and discipline in which they were so happily agreed, they were now prepared to instruct and regulate the societies as they had never been before; and, as the result of these deliberations, the work of God advanced with greater uniformity, and the different societies became molded and fashioned after the same image, as was necessary to consolidate them into one grand confederacy.

This beginning of *Conferences* lies at the foundation of that series of annual meetings of the preachers which has been extended to the present day. The second Conference commenced August 1, 1745, and consisted of *ten* persons, convened, as before, by Mr. Wesley's invitation. Some years after, he gave a general permission to all the preachers to attend, but soon retracted it. At these Conferences the *character* of the preachers was examined, points of doctrine and discipline reviewed as occasion required, complaints considered, and difficulties settled. The minutes of the several conversations held formed the *Discipline* of the societies. The last revision of them by Mr. Wesley was made in 1789.

These Conferences were entirely under his control so long as he lived. He decided every question, received, dismissed, and appointed the preachers as he judged best. In an explanatory letter, written by him in 1780, he says: "You have a wrong idea

of a Conference. For above six years after my return to England there was no such thing. I then desired some of our preachers to meet me in order to *advise, not control me*; and you may observe they had *no power* at all but what I exercised through them. I chose to exercise the power which God had given me in this manner, both to avoid ostentation and gently to habituate the people to *obey them* when I should be taken from their head; but, as long as I remain with them, the fundamental rule of Methodism remains inviolate." (Wesley's Works, Vol. VII, p. 228.)

The Conferences continued to be held annually after his death, on a plan wisely constructed by himself. They have also been adopted by all branches of the Methodist family, modified to suit the parties controlling them, as we shall see hereafter.

WESLEY'S APPEAL TO THE ESTABLISHED CLERGY.

Arrangements now being more fully settled, and the preachers assigned to particular fields of labor for a time, Mr. Wesley took occasion to reason with the established clergy, to whose ignorance and prejudice he attributed most of the persecutions the societies had suffered; and, wishing to do it in a manner the least offensive, he drew up a short "state of the case" between them and the Methodists, and sent it to a personal friend, to be used as he should see fit. This document so clearly indicates the principles, character, and condition of the societies at that time, we can not deny our young friends the privilege of reading it in this connection. Who will say that its demands are unreasonable? It reads as follows:

"About seven years since, we began preaching inward present salvation as attainable by faith alone. For preaching this doctrine we were forbidden to preach in most churches. We then preached in private houses, and, when the houses could not contain the people, in the open air. For this many of the clergy preached or printed against us as both heretics and schismatics. Persons who were convinced of sin begged us to advise them more particularly how to flee from the wrath to come. We desired them, being many, to come at one time, and we would endeavor it. For this we were represented, both from the pulpit and the press, as introducing Popery and raising sedition. Yea, all manner of evil was said, both of us and of those who used to assemble with us. Finding that some of these *did* walk disorderly, we desired them not to come to us any more; and some of the others we desired to overlook the rest, that we might know whether they walked worthy of the Gospel. Several of the clergy now stirred up the people to treat us as outlaws or mad-dogs. The people did so, both in Staffordshire, Cornwall, and many other places; and they do so still, wherever they are not restrained by fear of the magistrates.

"Now, what can *we* do, or what can *you* or our brethren do, toward healing this breach? Desire of *us* any thing which we can do with a safe conscience, and we will do it immediately. Will *you* meet us here? Will you do what we desire of you, so far as you can with a safe conscience?

"1. Do you desire us to preach another, or to desist from preaching this doctrine? We can not do this with a safe conscience.

"2. Do you desire us to desist from preaching in *private houses or in the open air*? As things are now circumstanced, this would be the same as desiring us not to preach at all.

"3. Do you desire us not to advise those who meet together for that purpose—to dissolve our societies? We can not do this with a safe conscience, for we apprehend many souls would be lost thereby.

"4. Do you desire us to advise them one by one? This is impossible, because of their number.

"5. Do you desire us to suffer those who walk disorderly still to mix with the rest? Neither can we do this with a safe conscience, for '*evil communications corrupt good manners.*'

"6. Do you desire us to discharge those *leaders*, as we term them, who overlook the rest? This is, in effect, to suffer the disorderly walkers still to remain with the rest.

"Do you desire us, *lastly*, to behave with tenderness both to the characters and persons of our brethren the clergy? By the grace of God we can and will do this, as, indeed, we have done to this day.

"If you ask what we desire of you to do, we answer:

"1. We do not desire any of you to let us preach in your church, either if you believe us to preach false doctrine, or if you have the least scruple; but we desire any who believes us to preach true doctrine, and has no scruple in the matter, not to be either publicly or privately discouraged from inviting us to preach in his church.

"2. We do not desire that any who thinks it his duty to preach or print against us should refrain therefrom; but we desire that none will do this till he has calmly considered both sides of the question, and that he would not condemn us unheard, but first read what we say in our own defense.

"3. We do not desire any favor if either Popery, sedition, or immorality be proved against us: but we desire you would not credit without proof any of those senseless tales that pass current with the vulgar; that, if you do not credit them yourselves, you will not relate them to others—yea, that you will discountenance those who still retail them abroad.

"4. We do not desire any preferment, favor, or recommendation from those that are in power, either in Church or State: but we desire, 1. That if any thing material be laid to our charge, we may be permitted to answer for ourselves; 2. That you would hinder your dependents from stirring up the rabble against us, who are certainly not the proper judges in these matters; and, 3. That you would effectually suppress and discountenance all riots and popular insurrections, which evidently strike at the foundation of all government, whether of Church or State."

THE PROPER STATUS OF METHODISM.

While thus reasoning with the clergy, and other opposers of his movements, he was not unmindful of the conduct of his friends. His advice to them was

equally pertinent and instructive. Nothing could more clearly certify the high moral purity of his purpose or the wisdom of his plan. The following is sufficient to indicate the view he took of the enterprise in which he was engaged:

“The FIRST general ADVICE which one who loves your souls would earnestly recommend to every one of you is, Consider, with deep and frequent attention, the peculiar circumstances wherein you stand. One of these is, that you are a new people. Your name is new (at least as used in a religious sense), not heard of, till a few years ago, either in our own or any other nation. Your principles are new, in this respect, that there is no other set of people among us (and possibly not in the Christian world) who hold them all in the same degree and connection; who so strenuously and continually insist on the absolute necessity of universal holiness both in heart and life; of a peaceful, joyous love of God; of a supernatural evidence of things not seen; of an inward witness that we are the children of God; and of the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, in order to any good thought, or word, or work. And perhaps there is no other set of people (at least not visibly united together) who lay so much, and yet no more, stress than you do on rectitude of opinions, on outward modes of worship, and the use of those ordinances which you acknowledge to be of God; and yet do not condemn any man upon earth merely for thinking otherwise than you do—much less to imagine that God condemns him for this, if he be upright and sincere of heart.

“Your strictness of life, taking the whole of it together, may likewise be accounted new. I mean, your making it a rule to abstain from fashionable diversions; your plainness of dress; your manner of dealing in trade; your exactness in observing the Lord’s day; your scrupulosity as to things that have not paid custom; your total abstinence from spirituous liquors (unless in cases of extreme necessity); your rule ‘not to mention the fault of an absent person, in particular of ministers, or of those in authority,’ may justly be termed new. For we do not find any body of people who insist on all these rules together.

“Consider these peculiar circumstances wherein you stand, and you will see the propriety of a SECOND ADVICE I would

recommend to you: Do not imagine you can avoid giving offense. Your very *name* renders this impossible. And as much offense as you give by your name, you will give still more by your principles. You will give offense to the *bigots* for opinions, modes of worship, and ordinances, by laying no more stress upon them; to the bigots against them, by laying so much; to men of form, by insisting so frequently and strongly on the inward power of religion; to moral men (so called), by declaring the absolute necessity of faith, in order to acceptance with God; to men of reason you will give offense, by talking of inspiration and receiving the Holy Ghost; to drunkards, Sabbath breakers, common swearers, and other open sinners, by refraining from their company, as well as by that disapprobation of their behavior which you will be often obliged to express. Either, therefore, you must consent to give up your principles or your fond hope of pleasing men. What makes even your principles more offensive is, this uniting of yourselves together; union renders you more conspicuous, placing you more in the eye of men; and more dreadful to those of a fearful temper; and more odious to men of zeal, if their zeal be any other than fervent love to God and man."

During the year 1746 Mr. Wesley traversed the most distant parts of the kingdom, and revivals prevailed in many places. He usually preached two or three times every day, and regulated the societies wherever he came. His whole heart was in the work, and his fixed resolution surmounted every difficulty.

THE QUALIFICATIONS OF THE PREACHERS.

"At this period, the preachers were not skilled beyond the first principles of religion, and the practical consequences deducible from them: '*repentance toward God, faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ,*' and the fruits that follow, '*righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.*' These were the subjects of their daily discourses, and these truths they knew *in power*.

But such was the low state of religious knowledge among the people that it was absolutely necessary to enforce these *first principles*, and to give them a practical influence on the heart and life, before they were led any farther. In these circumstances, the limited knowledge of the preachers was so far from being an inconvenience, that it was an *unspeakable advantage*, as it necessarily confined them to those fundamental points of *experimental* and *practical religion* which were best adapted to the state of the people. Ministers of diversified knowledge, but of little experience in the work of the Spirit of God, seldom dwell sufficiently in their sermons on these important points; and hence the preachers were far more successful in awakening sinners to a sense of their dangerous state, and in bringing them to a saving knowledge of Christ. To enforce the *necessity of repentance*, and of seeking salvation by grace alone through a Redeemer, the preacher would often draw a picture of human nature in such strong and natural colors that every one who heard him saw his own likeness in it, and was ready to say, '*He hath shown me all that was in my heart!*' The effect was surprising. The people found themselves, under every discourse, emerging out of the thickest darkness into a region of light, the blaze of which, being suddenly poured in upon them, gave exquisite pain at first, but soon showed them the way to peace and consolation."

PLANS FOR THE RIGHT KINDS OF BOOKS.

"Mr. Wesley foresaw that as knowledge was increased among the people it ought to be increased in the same, or even in a greater, proportion among

the preachers, otherwise they would become less useful. He, therefore, began to think of a collection of such books in the English language as might forward their improvement in treating of the various branches of practical divinity." (Moore's Life of Wesley.)

This foresight, for which Mr. Wesley was so peculiar, led him to consultation, particularly with Dr. Doddridge, in regard to the selection of a library. The Doctor treated the subject with great courtesy, and furnished the list of books desired, notwithstanding the printer was driving him hard for copy to complete the third volume of his "Family Expositor." It was about this time that it was inserted in the Minutes, for the benefit of the ministry: "Read the most *useful* books, and that regularly and constantly. Steadily spend all the morning in this employ, or, at least, five hours in the four-and-twenty.

" 'But I read only the Bible.' Then you ought to teach others to read only the Bible, and, by parity of reason, to *hear* only the Bible. But if so, you need preach no more. Just so said George Bell. And what is the fruit? Why, now he neither reads the Bible nor any thing else. This is rank enthusiasm. If you need no book but the Bible, you are got above St. Paul. He wanted others too. 'Bring the books,' says he, 'but especially the parchments,'—those wrote on parchment. 'But I have no taste for reading.' Contract a taste for it by use, or return to your trade.

" 'But I *have* no books.' I will give each of you, as fast as you will read them, books to the

value of five pounds. And I desire that the assistants would take care that all the large societies provide our works, or, at least, the notes, for the use of the preachers."

THE KINGSWOOD SCHOOL ESTABLISHED.

It was at this period, also, that Mr. Wesley originated the Kingswood School for the complete education of the young, where their morals would be secure. He had succeeded in the establishment of one for the children of the colliers, several years before, and was now looking to the interests of others in higher life. This school has done immense good, and, for many years, has been wholly devoted to the sons of the itinerant preachers.

How he obtained the means of carrying forward so many interests involving expense is partly explained by the following fact in connection with the establishment of this school. "He was mentioning to a lady, with whom he was in company in the neighborhood of Bristol, his desire and design of erecting a Christian school, such as would not disgrace the apostolic age. The lady was so well pleased with his views that she immediately went to her scrutoire and brought him five hundred pounds in bank-notes, desiring him to accept of them, and to enter upon his plan immediately. He did so. Afterward, being in company with the same lady, she inquired how the building went on, and whether he stood in need of farther assistance. He informed her that he had laid out all the money he had received, and that he was three hundred pounds in debt; at the same time apologizing, and entreating

her not to consider it as a concern of hers. But she immediately retired, and brought him the sum he wanted."

What his unparalleled plan of finance did not secure in small sums among the poor, the Providence of God supplied in this way. But that plan! Who has fully estimated it? The rules for the government of its operators, the stewards, show that it was sanctified by prayer, like every other part of his system. He earned and begged money only for God and his cause, and he would have the business transacted in the spirit of *vital piety*, as much as preaching, or any other religious duty. Hence, he drafted and gave to his stewards the following excellent rules:

CHARACTERS AND DUTY OF STEWARDS.

"1. You are to be men full of the Holy Ghost and of wisdom, that you may do all things in a manner acceptable to God. 2. You are to be present every Tuesday and Thursday morning, in order to transact the temporal affairs of the society. 3. You are to begin and end every meeting with earnest prayer to God for a blessing on all your undertakings. 4. You are to produce your accounts the first Tuesday in every month, that they may be transcribed into the ledger. 5. You are to take it in turn, month by month, to be chairman. The chairman is to see that all the rules be punctually observed, and immediately to check him who breaks any of them. 6. You are to do nothing without the consent of the minister, either actually had or reasonably presumed. 7. You are to consider, when-

ever you meet, 'God is here.' Therefore, be serious. Utter no trifling word. Speak as in his presence, and to the glory of his great name. 8. When any thing is debated, let one at once stand up and speak, the rest giving attention. And let him speak just loud enough to be heard, in love and in the spirit of meekness. 9. You are continually to pray and endeavor that a holy harmony of soul may in all things subsist among you; that in every step you may keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. 10. In all debates you are to watch over your spirits, avoiding, as fire, all clamor and contention; being '*swift to hear, slow to speak*;' in honor, every man preferring another before himself. 11. If you can not relieve, do not grieve the poor. Give them soft words, if nothing else. Abstain from either sour looks or harsh words. Let them be glad to come, even though they should go empty away. Put yourselves in the place of every poor man; and deal with him as you would God should deal with you."

METHODISM INTRODUCED TO IRELAND.

Ireland is the only country on which the Reformation under Luther had no good influence. Its rigid tenacity for Romanism had prevented its affiliation with other parts of the empire, and it had long been a question among Protestants how it could be reached. Various schemes had been suggested, but nothing done. Wesley and his coadjutors regarding the world as their parish, and all things possible to him that believeth, laid no plans; but early in 1747, Thomas Williams crossed the channel, and began to preach the new doctrine in Dublin, and immediately

attracted attention, and won sinners to Christ. Hearing of his success, Mr. Wesley was soon by his side, and formed a society of nearly three hundred members, which grew to be the largest in the United Kingdom, except one in London; but returned after a few weeks, and was followed by his brother and others, from whom Ireland received the word of life. The itinerants were now moving in all directions, toiling hard, and suffering every inconvenience imaginable but that of a guilty conscience and the frown of God. Mr. Charles Wesley, writing to his brother from Dublin about buying a preaching house, that would also accommodate the preachers, says: "I must go there or to some other lodgings, or take my flight; for here I can stay no longer. A family of squalling children, a landlady just ready to lie in, a maid who has no time to do the least thing for us, are some of our conveniences! Our two rooms for four people (six, when J. Healy and Haughton come) allow no opportunity for retirement. Charles and I groan for elbow-room in our press-bed; our diet answerable to our lodgings; no one to mend our clothes and stockings; no money to buy more. I marvel that we have stood our ground so long in these lamentable circumstances."

These inconveniences, accompanied by the most bitter persecution that Popery and carnality could devise, were enough to discourage ordinary minds; but these men were prepared for the emergency. To the personal enjoyment of true piety was added unparalleled success. Though ridiculed, and even *mobbed* in almost every place, souls were awakened and converted in great numbers, and new societies

sprung up in various places, not for the good of that priest-cursed country only, but for America and the world. God saw the Irish were to be scattered abroad by the force of circumstances, and he took this method to prepare them to be the bearers of vital religion to all lands whither they might go, as they have been. No country of its population has done more to diffuse Methodism, by personal representatives, than Ireland. Yet in no country was young Methodism more brutally persecuted. Cork distinguished itself by refusing to indict the rioters, but did indict Charles Wesley "as a person of ill-fame, a vagabond, and a common disturber of His Majesty's peace." Still, Mr. Wesley insisted to the last that "the Irish were the *politest* people that he ever met."

RELATION OF METHODISTS TO THE CHURCH.

Besides the difficulties which arose from poverty, unpopularity, mobs, etc., Mr. Wesley had others to surmount in carrying out his design, and what he understood to be the purpose of God, that must not be overlooked. He had no thought of leaving the Established Church, and did not leave it till he was removed to the Church triumphant. The societies he formed were *parts of the Church*, and aimed not at separation, but greater improvement in the knowledge and love of God. This circumstance exposed him to two classes of complainers, which made him much trouble; namely, those who thought he went too far; that having got the people converted, he ought to leave them to the watch-care of their legal pastors, particularly where they were truly pious,

and not organize them into societies; and, on the other hand, those who claimed that he did not go far enough—that he ought to secede, and form an independent Church.

The arguments of both parties bore an aspect of plausibility, to say the least; but they were manfully answered. His reason for not leaving his followers to the regular clergy was, generally, that it would prove fatal to their piety. Most of the clergy would treat them with derision, while the better disposed, and even the most pious among them, were incompetent to train up spiritual children, with whom they never “travailed in birth.” His reason for not forming an independency was, not that none could be saved out of the Church, but that he could better spread Scriptural holiness over the land by remaining in it, than by seceding, which was probably true at that time. Hence, he resisted every solicitation to closer adherence to the Church, and a greater departure from it, and drew near or receded, as his object seemed to require.

DIFFICULTY WITH MR. MAXFIELD AND ENTHUSIASM.

But some of the most serious obstacles Methodism had to overcome were produced by her own members. We have referred to Mr. Maxfield as the first lay preacher that appeared in the Wesleyan ranks, a young man of talent and usefulness. He was ordained by Bishop Barnard, on the recommendation of Mr. Wesley; the bishop saying, at the time, “Sir, I ordain you to assist that good man, that he may not work himself to death.”

Mr. Maxfield met the bishop’s design admira-

bly for a while, but afterward fell out by the way. It is all the same with the enemies of religion, whether its friends betray the cause by inactivity or enthusiasm; and often, when the devil fails in producing the first, he will succeed in the last. This seems to have been the case in London, where Mr. Maxfield was preaching. A revival was in powerful progress, notwithstanding much resistance, when some became wise above what is written, and *dreams, visions and revelations* took possession of several minds, and were regarded of paramount authority. Mr. Maxfield encouraged the delusion, which made it necessary to guard against his influence, and induced Mr. Wesley to write him quickly all that was in his heart.

But it had no good effect. Mr. Maxfield was too far gone to be recovered. He was at the bottom of the mischief, the very life of the cause, and stirred up the people against Mr. Wesley and the other preachers, as too cold and blind to teach them the deep things of the Spirit. At length the crisis came, and a considerable number of the society left, Mr. Maxfield among the rest. "And from that time," says Mr. Wesley, "he has spake all manner of evil of me, his father, his friend, his greatest earthly benefactor." Mr. Maxfield lived about twenty years after his separation; and Mr. Bell another prominent character in the drama, lived much longer, but made no pretensions to religion. When the last of February (the time for the world to come to an end, according to his prediction) arrived, and all things remained as they were, his spirit felt the rebuke, and veered to the opposite pole, where it sank into the icy depths of infidel indifference.

But the work of God still went on in London; and, though seventy-five persons left the society, several hundreds remained who were more united than ever. But the prediction that the world was coming to an end on the 28th of February created a great panic; and, taken in connection with the other errors of the separatists, and the transactions to which they gave birth, it was sadly injurious to the cause of religion.

These disturbances originated in *dreams* and *visions*, falsely assumed to be from God, which Mr. Maxfield encouraged. Imagining themselves to have direct communication from heaven on all matters, irrespective of the Bible, and that their brethren who did not indorse their operations were in *sin*, they became proud, censorious, and denunciatory. When Mr. Wesley tenderly remonstrated with them, one cried out, "We will not be browbeaten any longer." A few days after, she carried her own and her husband's tickets to Mr. Wesley, saying, "Sir, we will have no more to do with you; we will keep to Mr. Maxfield." Mr. Bell soon after left with others, saying, "Blind John is not capable of teaching us."

This was the beginning of a great deal of the kind that has since occurred in Methodist societies all over the world. It is one of the dangers incident to a high degree of religious zeal; and some have been so disgusted with it, that they have been afraid to have our people get happy in God for fear they would explode, and make trouble. But this will not do. We must surround them with all possible safeguards, and go forward. There is no danger of a cold locomotive running off the track. If we do n't

fire it up, it will not run at all. So dead Christlans seldom fall into Maxfield's errors, but they are enthusiasts after all, in expecting the end without using the means.

A FURTHER NOTE OF MR. WHITEFIELD.

Mr. Whitefield preached Calvinism with all his might, and, for a while, lost *caste* with the societies, but Calvinists of all classes rallied to hear him; and erected him a tabernacle near Wesley's Foundery. Though he had opposed *lay* preachers before, he now received and encouraged them. Mr. Cennick, Howell Harris, and others left Wesley and went over to him. Many of the aristocracy gave him their hearty indorsement, particularly Lady Huntingdon, by whose liberality and influence churches were erected faster than ministers could be found to occupy them. This was the origin of the "Lady Huntingdon Connection." It was not intended to be a *dissenting* body, but the good lady was obliged to take advantage of the "Act of Toleration," to maintain the control of her chapels, on which account, Romaine and others of her clerical sympathizers felt obliged to leave her in obedience to their churchly principles. She died at the age of eighty-four, saying, "My work is done. I have nothing to do but to go to my Father," leaving twenty thousand dollars to charitable objects, and the balance of her estate to the support of the sixty-four chapels which had been erected by her influence. Since that time the "Connection" bearing her name has made but a sorry show of progress, reminding us again, that the "race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong." When

Whitefield turned aside to Calvinism, and drew around him admiring crowds of rich and noble friends, poor Mr. Wesley was sad to find himself left to plod along without money or popular influence. But now, while there are few traces of the former outside of his biographies, the magnificent system and spirit of the latter are still "*marching along*" to consummate his grand purpose—the conversion of the world to Christ.

But still Mr. Whitefield did a good work which inured to the benefit of Scotch Presbyterians, the English and other European Churches, and religion generally in America. History records the name of no other man who equaled him in pulpit influence. And he was no less good than powerful. Notwithstanding the break between him and the Wesleys, to which we have referred, they *loved* as brethren, and co-operated in beautiful harmony, exchanging pulpits and preaching together in the most friendly manner. Nor could he be drawn into any very close sectarian alliance. The Scotch made special efforts to bind him to their "Solemn League and Covenant;" but it was an utter failure, whereupon they appointed a day of fasting, to pray against him. The rabble were equally unsuccessful. He could control tens of thousands of them on their own grounds, and compel them to hear him. Though he was no organizer he did a mighty work for Methodism, notwithstanding he discarded its Arminian doctrines.

CHAPTER VI.

REMARKABLE CIRCUMSTANCES — WESLEY'S VIEWS CHANGING—EXHORTERS PROVIDED FOR—LEANINGS TOWARD INDEPENDENCY—MISCELLANEOUS MODIFICATIONS AND CALVINISTIC CONTROVERSY.

THE plan of procedure having become more fully settled, the work of God went on much as already described, triumphing generally. It was resisted, however, at every point and by all possible means, affording the Master plenty of opportunities to manifest his power in a most convincing manner. Such manifestations are always necessary in spiritual reforms. The *tranquillity* of the preachers when stoned, kicked, and dragged through the streets by mobs was one of the most remarkable circumstances of the times. They seem to have been kept in "perfect peace." They maintained the same composed state of mind under other providential alarms. One morning, in 1750, when Charles Wesley arose in the Foundry to preach, an earthquake occurred, shaking all London, and terrifying the people beyond description; but, as by inspiration, he cried aloud to his frightened hearers, "Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be moved and the hills be carried into the midst of the sea; for the Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge." Speaking of the matter afterward, he said his "heart was filled

with faith and his mouth with words, shaking their souls as well as their bodies;" and during the night following, while many, alarmed, came to the Foundery begging for admittance, "our poor people," he says, "were calm and quiet as at any other time," thus demonstrating that God was with them.

The singular manner in which the enemies of the cause were sometimes arrested was equally impressive.

A CASE IN POINT.

John Thorp, of Yorkshire, was a tippler, and one of a gang who undertook to suppress the work by burlesque and *mimicry*. On one bacchanalian occasion three of the number had tried their hand at it, when John sprang to the table, inspired with ale, declaring that he would "beat all of them by taking off Whitefield." Opening the Testament at random, he read, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." The text struck his own heart like a bolt from heaven, but he spoke, to the astonishment of all who heard him. He said, after he became one of Wesley's preachers, that some of his sentences made his own hair stand erect, and that "if he ever preached in his life by the assistance of the spirit of God, it was at that time." Having ended his discourse, he left the room and his companions without a word, and after a long and hard struggle found peace in believing, and became a very holy and useful minister.

MR. WESLEY'S VIEWS CHANGING.

The reader must have been amazed, in tracing the foregoing pages, at the tenacity with which Mr.

Wesley clung to the Church. Excluded from its pulpits, denounced by many of its bishops and other clergy, mobbed by their approval and instigation even, and often shocked by their wickedness, it was reasonable to believe that he would become alienated; but he seems to have held on to the last, and it was wise, perhaps, that he did so. Reformers have often defeated their own objects by taking the opposite course. Many have lost their cause and their lives by leaving what seemed to them to be a sinking ship, while those who remained on board saved both.

We have seen how much *books* had to do with his early experience. Needing improvement in another direction, Lord King's "Account of the Primitive Church" comes to his aid and makes a powerful impression. "In spite of the vehement prejudice of my education," he says, "I was ready to believe that this was a fair and impartial draft; but, if so, it would follow that bishops and presbyters are (essentially) of one order, and that originally every Christian congregation was a Church independent of all others." This exploded his notions of apostolic succession, and left him free to follow Providence in providing for his multiplying followers, though he had no intention at the time of organizing a new sect. According to this doctrine, there was no further necessity for his going to the bishops for ordination or any thing else; nor, indeed, was ordination from any source necessary to a Gospel ministry, however convenient and appropriate it might be as a public and formal consecration of a minister to his work. The main point with him now was the *call*

of God. Having this, a man was divinely authorized, irrespective of bishops or conventions, to go forward. These views prepared him for important measures which he did not then anticipate.

With this start in the right direction, he was prepared to say, two years after, that "a national Church is a political institution," and that the three orders, bishop, priest, and deacon, are not enjoined by the Scriptures; that conformity in Church government was not taught by the inspired writers, and many other kindred sentiments in opposition to his former convictions.

THE CALL TO PREACH—HOW TESTED.

The third Conference, held at Bristol May 12, 1746, brought up the subject of *a call to preach*, which was agitating the minds of many young men no less than that of Mr. Wesley. To the question, "How shall we try those who think they are moved by the Holy Ghost and are called to preach?" the following tests were given: "1. Do they know God as a pardoning God? Have they the love of God abiding in them? Do they desire and seek nothing but God? and are they holy in all manner of conversation? 2. Have they gifts (as well as grace) for the work? Have they (in some tolerable degree) a clear, sound understanding? Have they a right judgment in the things of God? Have they a just conception of salvation by faith? and has God given them any degree of utterance? Do they speak justly, readily, clearly? 3. Have they fruit? Are any truly convinced of sin and converted to God by their preaching? As long as these three marks con-

cur in any, we believe that he is called of God to preach. These we receive as a sufficient proof that he is moved thereto by the Holy Ghost."

This is one of the *boldest* and *grandest* planks in the Methodist platform, and has stood the test of criticism to the present day. (See Discipline, par. 138-142.) And there never has been a moment when it was more important to be strictly observed in our administration than now. No formulas or literary acquirements can supersede it. It is *fundamental* to the perpetuity of Methodism in the world as a *spiritual power*. If a man possesses these qualifications, he *is called* of God to preach, irrespective of his birth, education, nationality, or color. If he is *without* them, he is not called, though he may have every other imaginable endowment. We may as safely let the doctrines of the trinity or the new birth drop out of our creed as to overlook this in our administration; and now that education and ministerial *salaries* and conveniences are increasing among us, there is vastly more danger of our faltering at this point than in relation to any other. "FRUIT" was originally an indispensable proof of this call. May it continue to be so forever!

EXHORTERS PROVIDED FOR.

This Conference too, provided for another class of workers, which still holds an honorable position in the ranks of Methodism; we refer to exhorters. The object of them was to keep *down* a certain class of excitable and ignorant persons, of little capacity, and bring out all who might be useful in public exhortation and prayer. Hence, it was ordained that

none should be allowed to exercise in this way, without a note of authority or license from the preacher, to be renewed annually. Under this arrangement, persons of marked adaptation to the work, appearing in the classes and love-feasts, were made exhorters, and, filling this office well, were graduated to the local ministry; and from that, if suitable, to the itinerant work. To say nothing of it as a suppressing measure, it is admirably adapted to develop men for the higher activities of the ministry; and we think this license should be often given, where we now give a license to preach. Trembling beginners will generally pass better with a congregation as exhorters than as preachers. Let it be announced that "Rev. Mr. T will preach," and it will be a failure, where the same service would prove a success, being understood that "brother T. would lead the meeting." On the same principle, high-sounding titles, such as D. D., have often depreciated service that would have been quite acceptable and useful under less pretentious announcements. They create high expectations, which, being disappointed, a respectable effort passes for nothing,

LEANING TOWARD INDEPENDENCY.

Up to this time Mr. Wesley's hope was to effect such a revival in the Church, that the clergy would look after his converts, and render any serious deviation from canonical order unnecessary. He had been so fearful of breaking away from the Church, that he had held many of his new appliances under restraint, having misgivings about his lay preachers, and instructing them, at times, not to form any new

societies, etc. But his late discoveries on ecclesiastical questions, and the failure of the clergy to sympathize with his objects, together with the unprecedented rally of the people to his meetings, forced him to more decisive action in several particulars. One was, to map out his territory into circuits, and place his preachers on them. Another most reasonable one was to *form societies* wherever God should bring the people to accept his message. He did this because, as he says, under the other policy "almost all the seed has fallen upon the wayside; there is scarce any fruit of it remaining." This was done at the fifth conference, in 1748, when the preachers were urged to more brotherly fraternity among themselves. In 1749 he took another step toward consolidation, in appointing one of his helpers in each circuit to take charge of all the societies, giving him the name of "assistant." The same conference provided for holding "quarterly"-meetings, while love-feasts and watch-nights were to be held monthly. The assistant was required, too, to supply every society with books and tracts, and report and pay over the money received for them at the quarterly-meetings. This was the organic commencement of the Methodist book business, which went forth into all lands with the ministry, and as a part of ministerial work. Here, too, was the systematic commencement of tract distribution as a means of salvation, which has since grown to mammoth proportions.

Taking all these things together, Methodism began to look a good deal like a Church, having a creed, discipline, societies, conferences, a generally recognized leader, assistants, helpers, etc.; but still Mr. Wesley

disclaimed every thing of the sort, calling his meeting-houses "*chapels*," and his assemblies "*societies*." Nevertheless, the Church was there, and the gates of hell have never been able to prevail against it.

MISCELLANEOUS EVENTS.

With these common-sense arrangements, Mr. Wesley and his associates proceeded to cultivate their old fields and open new ones as they were able. They encountered much opposition, but mobs were less frequent and violent than formerly, particularly with the leaders. He went to Scotland, but found it less impressible than any other country he visited. Calvinism was the prevailing sentiment of the State Church, and to defend that was the highest type of piety. Debate was the order of the day generally. In 1756 Charles Wesley retired from the itinerancy, and confined his labors chiefly to London and Bristol. In reviewing the work, Mr. Wesley remarks: "I preached on these words: 'He hath not dealt so with any nation,' no, not even with Scotland nor New England. In both these, God has indeed made bare his arm, yet not in so astonishing a manner as among us," in the following particulars: 1. The number reformed. 2. The swiftness of the work, in sudden conversions. 3. The depth of it, changing the heart and life. 4. In its clearness, giving assurance of God's love. 5. In its continuation—the work in Scotland and New England lasting but a few weeks, while this had continued eighteen years; besides, those works had been aided by many of the most eminent ministers, whereas in this "only two or three inconsiderable clergymen, with a few young, unlettered men," had been

engaged, and these "had been opposed by nearly all the clergy and laity of the nation."

Mr. Wesley traversed Ireland several times, with good success. In 1752 he made another trip, and became acquainted with a young man by the name of Embury, of German origin, who was afterward licensed to preach, and had the honor of preaching the first Methodist sermon and forming the first class in America, as will appear hereafter. In some parts the work was powerful, and raised communities from the lowest degradation to the highest moral respectability. But his labors and cares at last overcame him. Near the close of 1753 he was brought low by disease, and expected the next hour would be his last, when he wrote his own modest epitaph, as follows: "Here lieth the body of John Wesley, a brand plucked from the burning, who died of consumption in the fifty-first year of his age, not leaving, after his debts are paid, ten pounds behind him." But prayer was offered for his recovery, and he was spared to carry forward the good work which he had so wonderfully begun.

FIRST MENTION OF SALARIES.

There having been no arrangements made for the support of the preachers beyond their traveling expenses, which were paid by the stewards, and many having been obliged to leave the work to provide for their families, the conference of 1752 ordained that each preacher should receive *twelve* pounds (a little less than sixty dollars) per annum, provided the people pleased to pay it. But even this small amount was seldom realized. This action, however,

authorizing it, was the beginning of Methodist legislation on the subject of ministerial salaries, and formed a sort of model for future estimates. About sixty dollars was the standard "quarterage" of all classes of traveling preachers in this country for many years, but was seldom obtained.

A DANGEROUS POINT SAFELY PASSED.

The question of ecclesiasticism was ever present, and always a disturbing element among the societies. As before shown, the Wesleys were scrupulously attached to the established Church. John had become considerably shaken, but Charles was inflexible. Some of the lay preachers had no sympathy with their views on the subject, and had broken over so far as to administer the sacraments, and quite a little controversy had commenced, creating serious apprehensions that the conference of 1755 would result in an open rupture. Three days were given to the discussion, when the lay preachers agreed, for the sake of peace, to cease from administering the sacraments, and the question of separation was postponed, though not settled. While John Wesley resisted separation, he confessed that he was unable to answer the arguments in favor of it; but he was afraid the preachers and people would leave, not the Church, but "the love of God." "I dare not in conscience," he says, "spend my time and strength on externals. If, as my lady says, all outward establishments are Babel, so is this establishment. Let it stand, for me; I neither set it up nor pull it down. But let you and I build up the city of God. Church or no Church, we must attend to the work of saving souls."

Charles Wesley took offense, and thought he would never attend another conference; but he did, the very next one; and did good work afterward. Dr. Stevens well says of him: "Methodism owes inestimable obligations to Charles Wesley for the unrivaled Psalmody which he gave it, and for his eloquence, his travels, and his sufferings in its behalf. His ecclesiasticism, however, continually retarded its development, and had he ultimately prevailed, he would have defeated one of the most momentous measures in its history—its American organization." (His., Vol. I, p. 399.) It is believed by many that had Methodism broken loose from the Church at that time, it might have been better; but this is by no means certain. Wesley's "twelve reasons" for not doing so are worthy of consideration. They had a soothing influence, and great harmony prevailed.

OF MINISTERS, STATISTICS, ETC.

The twenty-second conference was held in Manchester, August 30, 1765, and assumed the order of business and the publication of minutes, embracing the names of the preachers and their appointments, which has been maintained, with variations, ever since. This conference, too, provided for certificates, or tickets, securing members recognition in other societies; for men and women sitting apart in church; for the limitation of love-feasts to an hour and a half; for congregational singing; family prayer, morning and evening; for the total abstinence of preachers from tobacco and drams, etc.; for clerical *superannuation*.

Up to this time there seems to have been no

attempt to number the people; but at the next conference an imperfect beginning was made in this direction, showing from many of the circuits about one hundred preachers, and more than *ten thousand* members. Collections had been made for some years to aid the poorer societies. This year the debt on all the chapels amounted to over fifty thousand dollars, upon which Mr. Wesley said, "We shall be utterly ruined if we go on at this rate," and ordered that no building should be commenced until two-thirds of the cost of it should be subscribed. Mr. Wesley's concluding address originated his memorable instructions on pastoral visiting, instructing the children, reading, etc., which still form a part of our excellent Discipline.

The conference of 1767 was distinguished by the admission of Francis Asbury on trial, who afterward became the hero of American Methodism. Its improved statistical reports showed a large increase of members, amounting to 25,911. The sale of the books was *urged* with more emphasis, and the assistants were required to give them prudently to the poor, and beg the money to pay for them, thus initiating the policy which has been developed in the organization of our Sunday-school and Tract Societies. Finding some of the trustees were anxious lest the same preachers should be returned to them many years in succession, they were allowed to insert a clause in their new deeds restricting their continuance to two years.

The conference of 1769 reported 28,263 members, and instituted a new question; namely, "Who is willing to go to America?" in response to a call

from New York, where Mr. Embury had struck the first blow, and had erected a little chapel; Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmour consented, and were appointed. A noble collection of some three hundred and forty dollars was then taken on the spot, nearly one hundred of which went to pay the expenses of the voyage, and the balance was appropriated toward the debt resting on the first Methodist chapel in the New World. Thus matters went on from year to year, continually improving in system, numbers, and strength, but not without much labor and personal sacrifice.

MR. WHITEFIELD'S DEATH.

Though this wonderful man differed with Mr. Wesley on doctrinal grounds, he still co-operated with him in the most fraternal spirit and manner. This difference gave him many advantages, especially in Scotland and America, and enabled him to achieve in those countries what he could not have done as an Arminian. Though he was theoretically a Calvinist, he generally preached as free and full salvation as any Methodist could desire. He was born an *orator*, converted *on fire*, and the flame increased to the morning of his ascension. He flew from country to country, crossing the Atlantic *thirteen* times, preached *eighteen thousand* sermons, or *ten* per week during the thirty-four years of his public ministry, and addressed more people, probably, than any man that ever lived. He left England for the last time in September, 1769, and after traversing America for a few months, preaching several times a week to entranced and weeping throngs, he died

suddenly of asthma at Newburyport, September 30, 1770, just as the sun was rising, and left a name that will be as enduring as eternity.

THE CALVINISTIC CONTROVERSY.

The next general conflict the societies experienced arose from a revival of *Antinomianism*, which was eating out the vitals of religion all over the kingdom. Though Methodism had excluded none from its fellowship on account of doctrinal errors, it nevertheless had a theory of its own, which was considered important, though not positively indispensable to regeneration. But it now became evident enough that some of those principles, which had been treated with great liberality, were working the death of practical piety. This was particularly the case with that system of error called Antinomianism, which assumes that, as the elect can not fall from grace, nor forfeit the divine favor, the wicked actions they commit not being really sinful, they have no occasion either to confess their sins, or to break them off by repentance. In the presence of such views, Methodism seemed to be the grossest kind of error and enthusiasm. If the elect were so bound that they could not sin, reprobates could not reform, and all attempts to interfere with either could but be at variance with the decrees of the Almighty. Under such teachings the spirituality of the Church had greatly declined, and must necessarily suffer still further damage. Mr. Fletcher saw this, and wrote:

“At this time we stand particularly in danger of splitting upon the Antinomian rock. Many smatterers in Christian experience talk of *finished salvation*

in Christ, or boast of being in a state of justification and sanctification, while they know little of themselves, and less of Christ. Their whole behavior testifies that their heart is void of humble love, and full of carnal confidence. They cry '*Lord, Lord!*' with as much assurance and as little right as the foolish virgins. They pass for sweet Christians, dear children of God, and good believers; but their secret reserves evidence them to be only such believers as Simon Magus, Ananias, and Sapphira."

To prevent this terrible malaria from poisoning the young societies, which had now become pretty numerous, the conference of 1770 called up the subject, and reaffirmed certain propositions directly opposed to the Antinomian theory. The *minutes* of this conference created great excitement. The Calvinists took the alarm, and the Honorable and Reverend Walter Shirley wrote a circular letter to all the serious clergy, and certain laymen, inviting them to meet at Bristol on the sixth of the following August, the time and place of Mr. Wesley's next conference, and go to the conference in a body, and "insist on a formal *recantation* of the said minutes," and in case of a refusal, "that they sign and publish their protest against them," a most singular interference with other people's business, and an assumption of right, which indicates more of conceit than humility. What gave special influence to the letter, was the fact that the proposition originated with Lady Huntingdon, an old friend of Mr. Wesley, and of the Wesleyan movement.

Mr. Fletcher, characterized as the "Sainted Fletcher," because of his extraordinary piety, on

receiving one of these circulars, communicated the contents to Mr. Wesley, proposing to stand by him and his doctrine to the last. He also wrote to Mr. Shirley, entreating him to recall his circulars, and wrote such other letters as he thought might be necessary, in order to counteract the influence of the plot. But all availed nothing. The opposition to the minutes waxed warm, and a long controversy ensued, to which we are indebted for Fletcher's four volumes of "*Checks to Antinomianism*;" a work which has, indeed, agreeably to its talented author's promise, *stood by* Mr. Wesley and his principles "to the last." Being written in a charming style, and with a power of argument which no sophistry can gainsay; and, withal, breathing the very spirit of heaven in every line, it has been a bulwark of defense to our theology, against which all the fiery darts of opponents have been hurled in vain. How much we owe, how much the truth of God owes, how much the universal Church and the world owe to this work, we, of course, have no means of exact information; but in our opinion, there is not a work extant which has done more, under God, for the honor and perpetuity of Christian theology in its purity and power. Under its withering glance, error has blushed and fled away, or assumed a new aspect, which, in its turn, has been rebuked, and retired. Its birth was a glorious era in Methodism. We commend the work to the careful examination of all who are in any way troubled with the Calvinistic delusion. They will find it a sovereign argument against it as it was, or now is, when it is properly understood. And it is equally appropriate to those who would understand the doctrines

of Methodism, and the grounds on which they rest for defense. Every preacher, especially, should read it carefully. It is an ample remedy for modern *fatalism*, that is creeping into the Church under the guise of *science*; and is *solid gold* when compared with many modern works which aim to meet the emergency.

Tuesday, August 6th, the conference commenced its session, and Mr. Shirley and his friends appeared. The conversation that ensued lasted two hours, and elicited mutual explanations; but no "*recantation*;" and the controversy ensued, to which we have referred; Mr. Fletcher managing the Arminian side of the question, and Mr. Shirley, Rowland Hill, Augustus Montague Toplady, Mr. Berridge, and other able and distinguished divines, the Calvinistic side; thus relieving Mr. Wesley from a task that in other controversies had devolved upon him, and leaving him at liberty to prosecute the great work of which he was the acknowledged leader. The debate lasted six years, and created much excitement. Many bitter words were employed by some of the contestants, who deeply regretted them afterward. Toplady alone retained his prejudice to the last, and made no retraction; but all agreed that Mr. Fletcher maintained himself with admirable saintliness. Most of his opponents loved and honored him. As he entered the parsonage of Mr. Berridge twenty years after, Mr. Berridge ran and took him in his arms, exclaiming, "My dear brother, this is indeed a satisfaction I never expected. How could we write against each other, when we both aim at the same thing, the glory of God and the good of souls?" Some evils attended

the controversy no doubt; but it revolutionized the theology of the nations, and laid the foundation for the great revivals of religion that have lifted the world to a higher plane of sentiment and practice than it ever occupied before. The "Checks" were triumphant, and still hold the field. They were written in the spirit of profound piety, and on the borders of eternity. Speaking of a call he made on Mr. Fletcher during this discussion, a visitor remarks, "I went to see a man with one foot in the grave, but found him with one foot in *heaven*."

One of the most marked evils of the controversy occurred in Scotland. Many had been converted there and several societies formed. But in the midst of the work this question arose. The excellent Mr. Hervey, author of the "Meditations," and an old pupil of Mr. Wesley, had formerly been induced to write some letters, which being now published and scattered among the young believers did much harm.* "O," said one of the preachers then in Scotland, "the precious convictions which these letters have destroyed! Many, that have often declared the great profit they received under our ministry, were by these induced to leave us." "Though the preachers met with no mobs in Scotland to oppose their progress, they encountered prejudices that were more formidable." Says Dr. Whitehead: "They found the Scots strongly intrenched within the lines of religious opinions and modes of worship, which almost bade defiance to any mode of attack."

* These letters were not published till after Mr. Hervey's death, and then against his dying prohibition; to serve two objects, namely: the covetousness of one man and the bigotry of another.

A LESSON WORTH REMEMBERING.

We can not discuss this subject without asking special attention to one aspect of it that is liable to be overlooked. History, to effect all its legitimate objects, must mark the *defects* of men and measures as well as their excellencies.

The early patronage of Lady Huntingdon was a matter of no small importance to Mr. Wesley and his friends. Her wealth and rank gave her a commanding influence. Young Methodism, in its weakness and unpopularity, needed just that thing to encourage and carry it through the difficulties it had to encounter. It is not strange, therefore, that the pious lady was prized and petted. Then, it was a very unusual thing for a woman of her rank to be so devout. The "Holy Club" could but esteem her on this account.

In the fullness of her love for the cause, she established a seminary at Trevecka, in Wales, for the education of pious young men for the ministry, admitting none except such as had been "converted to God and were resolved to dedicate themselves to his service." They were allowed to remain three years, and have their board and tuition free, with one suit of clothes a year, and on leaving they might go to the established Church or join any other Protestant Church—a noble charity which could but be commended. On this basis Mr. Fletcher accepted her invitation to take the charge, and Mr. Benson to be head master, and things went on beautifully. Mr. Benson gave his whole time to the work, and Mr. Fletcher was there often—more than was

expected at the outset—breathing his holy influence upon the young men, and was universally admired—almost worshiped. It was, indeed, a *model* school, that can hardly be too closely imitated by our own theological seminaries. But by some means the good lady became so thoroughly wedded to the *decrees* that when the *minutes* of the conference of 1770 came out, though they set forth no other doctrine than had been preached from the beginning of the movement, she put her little foot down, and determined to purge her school and chapels of all Arminian teachers and preachers. Accordingly, she summarily dismissed Mr. Benson, *simply* because he did not believe the doctrine of “absolute predestination.” Mr. Fletcher wrote her that he did hold, with Mr. Wesley, “the possibility of salvation for all men. If this is what you call Mr. Wesley’s opinion and *Arminianism*, and if *every Arminian must quit the college*, I am actually discharged; for, in my present view of things, I must hold that sentiment if I believe that the Bible is true and that God is love. For my part, I am no party man. In the Lord, I am your servant and that of your every student; but I can not give up the honor of being counted with my old friends, who, notwithstanding their failings, are entitled to my respect, gratitude, and affection. Mr. Wesley shall always be welcome to my pulpit, and I shall gladly bear my testimony in his as well as Mr. Whitefield’s. If you forbid your students to preach for the one and offer them to preach for the other, and if a master is discarded for believing that Christ died for all, then prejudice reigns, charity is cruelly wounded, and party spirit *shouts*,

PREVAILS, TRIUMPHS! I am determined to stand or fall with the liberty of the college. As I entered it a free place, I must quit it the moment it is a harbor for party spirit." (Wesley's Works, Vol. VI, pp. 440, 441.) Seeing no yielding on the part of the countess, he resigned soon after, and wrote his immortal "Checks."

Thank God, neither Wesley nor Fletcher would be ruled by men or women, great or small, rich or poor, or all together! They had a work to do, and they possessed the *manliness* and *godliness* to do it, at the loss of all things, if necessary. Had they surrendered, Methodism had been the little creature of Lady Huntingdon, false in doctrine, limited to a few English acres, inefficient and unimportant in the history of religion and the world; but, following their own settled convictions as to doctrine and duty, they filled the world with their God-given sentiments, and drove Calvinism out of most pulpits, covenants, and creeds into the oblivion of rejected theology

Wesleyans have generally imitated their example in this respect and prospered. A few have surrendered to "My Lady" or "His Honor" or some other tempting prospect by the sacrifice of principle or established policy, but never with permanent success. The *bubble* has soon broken and demonstrated the folly of their course. *Toadying* to *kings* even, however good, does not pay in religion. They *must* die, and it is not likely that their successors will inherit their *virtues*.

CHAPTER VII.

CALVINISTIC METHODISM—WESLEY AND HIS WORK—PROMINENT CHARACTERS INITIATED—PROVISION FOR THE SACRAMENTS—DEED OF DECLARATION.

CALVINISTIC Methodism was not altogether a failure. Its *Methodism*, not its predestination, had a gracious influence on the Churches of both Europe and America, the effects of which remain to this day. It at first attempted no new organization, but sought rather to vitalize existing Churches. Mr. Whitefield, however, commenced his Orphan House on his first visit to Georgia. That colony had been established by Mr. Oglethorpe as an asylum for unfortunate debtors and persecuted Protestants, with a common seal, bearing the cap of *liberty*. Slavery was excluded, because, as Mr. Oglethorpe said, it was “against the Gospel, as well as the fundamental law of England, a horrid crime.” Besides, it was claimed that slaves would “starve the poor laborer.”

But on Mr. Whitefield's second visit, finding that the colony did not prosper, he proposed to send his traveling companion to England to persuade the trustees to admit of the introduction of both *slavery* and *rum*. He afterward became a slave-holder, and before his death had fifty slaves belonging to the

Orphan House, which fell to the Countess of Huntingdon by his will, with his lands, books, and furniture, showing that he differed as widely with Wesley on human rights as on human *redemption*.

Had this style of Methodism taken denominational form in the South, as Arminian *antislavery* Methodism did some *forty-six* years afterward, and been a success, it is not unreasonable to believe that the result on the fortunes of the slave would have been very different from what we now witness. And it is not the fault of Lady Huntingdon that it did not; for, after the death of Whitefield, she bought up all claims against his estate, and commenced missionary operations in the South on a large scale. Beginning with a day of fasting and prayer in all her chapels, she called her ministers and students together at Trevecka, and organized a missionary corps of pious young men, and started them off for Georgia, October 27, 1772. Jubilees were held, sermons preached, an embarkation song was written by Mr. Shirley for the occasion, and sung with burning zeal, amid flowing tears. The whole community was moved, and "nothing was ever seen so *blessed*" as the spirit with which these self-consecrating martyrs went forth to redeem the perishing South. The poor rejected Arminians looked on with amazement, and, we trust, with joy, though they regarded themselves superseded in the New World, for which they had as yet laid no plans.

Reaching Georgia in a few weeks, these pious adventurers gathered at the Orphan House, from whence they sallied forth in all directions, preaching with grand success, giving particular attention to the slaves. Every thing went on hopefully for several

years. Calls for their services came thick and fast, new churches were proposed if they would come and occupy them. The provincial government favored them, and offered pecuniary aid. What could be more charming? And God seemed to bless them, and no doubt did so. But after all, his *decrees* crossed their path, and exploded the whole scheme. The Revolutionary War burst upon the country, and made things so hot around them, that they all returned to England. The Orphan House was burned, the Whitefield property confiscated, and the whole territory left to await the coming of the discarded *anti-slavery*, Arminian Methodism. After the war, the countess made a vigorous effort, through Washington, Franklin, and others, to recover her property and position, but to no purpose; her peculiar Methodism in God's inscrutable providence had been found wanting, and was abolished.

THE FORTUNES OF THE CAUSE IN EUROPE.

The countess having taken advantage of the "Act of Toleration" to protect her chapels, she had to provide for the ordination of her preachers independently of the bishops. This broke the connection between her and some of her ablest clerical supporters. She however presided like a bishop over her clergy, calling and sending ministers at pleasure. But time and care were breaking her down, and in 1791 she closed her singular but useful life in the eighty-fourth year of her age, having vainly endeavored to make arrangements for the continuance of the work she had begun. Her advisers failed her at the last from one cause or another, and she left her work to the

care of her executors. It has since been largely absorbed by the Congregationalists. The Wales department, which was started prior to her public approval of Methodism, being well organized, continues to live and is doing much good. Her chapels and school also still live and bear her name, but effect comparatively little for the public good.

MR. WESLEY AND HIS WORK.

Mr. Wesley still held on his way, traveling more than four thousand miles a year, generally on horseback, until he was seventy years of age, when he took to his carriage. He preached also several times a day, presided at his conferences, and supervised every part of the work, besides writing more voluminously than most authors who devoted their whole time to it. When he was seventy-two years old, he wrote in his "Journal," "I find just the same strength as I did thirty years ago." In 1784, he wrote on his eighty-second birthday, "I find myself just as strong to labor, and as fit for any exercise of body or mind as I was forty years ago." This remarkable preservation he every-where attributes to God first, and subordinately to his manner of living, being much in the open air, and never *fretting*.

The conference of 1771, to which we have referred, reported 30,338 members and 125 preachers. Francis Asbury and Richard Wright offered themselves for America, and were sent. Joseph Benson, distinguished afterward in the counsels and literature of the Church, made his first appearance in the minutes this year, though he had been a teacher at Kingswood, and afterward at Treveeka,

and had been dismissed by the countess as before stated, because he could not indorse Calvinism. His Methodism had also prevented his ordination in the Established Church. This was a great grievance to him at first, but a greater blessing in the end, as it gave him more of the joy of salvation, and Methodism one of its most learned and useful ministers and writers for a half century, as may be inferred from his excellent commentary, sermons, and the Methodist magazine, of which he was editor some eighteen years prior to his death, which occurred in 1821. He was as wise in counsel as he was pious and learned, and twice enjoyed the honor of being president of the Wesleyan Conference. It is really wonderful how God supplied the wants of that young, but zealous people, raising up just the right men to open new fields, like Nelson, Coke, and Asbury; *defenders* of the faith, like Fletcher; and commentators, like Clarke and Benson. Men from all ranks and conditions of society, with special adaptation to particular and necessary labors, were called as they were needed.

Three years later, Samuel Bradburn appeared in the conference, a peculiar genius, just unlike any other preacher then or since known, afterward distinguished as the "Demosthenes of Methodism." Dr. Clarke said of him, "I never heard his equal; I can furnish no adequate idea of his powers as an orator; we have not a man among us that will support any thing like a comparison with him." He was a grand looking man, withal, full of natural humor, as well as vital religion, and it often served him a good turn, especially in mobs. Though trained a shoemaker, he was equal to all occasions, and for forty years rendered

memorable service; and then departed in good hope of a glorious immortality.

The conference for 1777 was held at Bristol, and appointed 154 preachers, and reported 38,274 members, exclusive of those in America, from which no report was received on account of the Revolutionary War. Including about seven thousand members there, this was a respectable gain. But still some imagined, as many have since, that Methodism was waning, having lost much of its simplicity and power. This led Mr. Wesley to a thorough canvass of the conference to ascertain the facts, the result of which was, that there was *no* decline. But one of the honest but desponding preachers, John Hilton, could not acquiesce in this finding, and not wishing to go down with a sinking cause, left and hid himself among the Quakers.

METHODISM IN PRISONS.

One of the striking features of these times, and, indeed, of all the early periods of Methodism, is the attention it gave to prisoners. And this is hardly strange when we consider their number and the horrible treatment they received from the English authorities. Men were imprisoned for almost every little real or imaginary offense,—even for debt, however innocent, or unable to pay, and *hung* for the theft of a sixpence. How such cruelty was tolerated in the presence of God's Word and a pretentious Christian Church is unaccountable. The Oxford students, coming into sympathy with Jesus, were at once moved with pity for them, and ran to their relief. And it was characteristic of Methodists

every-where to care for the wicked and poor of every community. In visiting a place, instead of courting the wealthy and respectable, they ran at once to the sick and miserable—to the prisoners, soldiers, and outcasts, and God raised up from these classes some of their most effective laborers. Mr. Wesley took special pains to preach to the soldiers, many of whom were converted and called to the ministry. At the conference of 1778, he urged the preachers to visit the prisoners. He had faith in the Gospel to raise the fallen and save the lost; even to convert the prejudiced Romanists, and many of them believed and were born again. If we will carry on the work which he so nobly began, we must imitate his faith and practice in this respect, and not go beating about to find *easy* and respectable cases.

ANOTHER NECESSARY PROVISION.

About this time a talented young man, the only son of wealthy parents, entered the ministry of the Established Church, at South Petherton, and attracted much attention, though destitute of the one thing needful. Falling in with Mr. Maxfield, he received some new light, which was greatly increased soon after by conversation with a poor Methodist peasant, who explained to him justification by faith, regeneration, the witness of the Spirit, etc.; when he threw aside his notes and began to preach in good earnest, and while preaching received the witness in himself, and was “filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory.” This so inspired him that he was denounced as a Methodist, rejected by his rector, reproved by

his bishop, threatened by a mob, as a matter of course, and chimed out of the Church; whereupon he preached in the streets, and having read Fletcher's incomparable "Checks," joined the Methodists, and became the celebrated Dr. Coke, the first Methodist bishop of America, and the founder of Wesleyan missions, upon which the sun has never set for many years. Thus God keeps up the succession of right men for the carrying on of his work. Though Mr. Wesley never worried, he had often wondered who would succeed him at his death. Mr. Fletcher had declined the honor. All his other arrangements thus far had been unsatisfactory, but here was the man to suggest a practicable plan of adjustment, "The Deed of Declaration," and to act a leading part in securing for it the general approval of both preachers and people. Mr. Wesley regarded him as his right-hand.

ANOTHER IMPORTANT MAN CALLED.

While Wesley was preaching in Dublin on one of his early visits to that city, a youth went to hear him, and was interested. Subsequently, that same young man heard his brother in London. Afterward, on hearing one Smyth in Ireland, who had been dismissed from his curacy on the charge of Methodist tendencies, the love of God was shed abroad in his heart, when he began to visit the prisoners and other sufferers for their good. After many struggles and labors he graduated to the Methodist ministry, and was received into the conference in 1779 on probation. This was Henry Moore, who, in the course of a few years, was stationed in London, and became Mr. Wesley's confidential adviser on all important

matters, and his traveling companion. He was also ordained by him, and made one of the trustees of his manuscripts and books. Mr. Wesley prized him very highly, and was, no doubt, much aided by his wise and pious counsels in his old age, in the absence of Dr. Coke, who was flying from continent to continent, planting the Gospel in new fields. This prepared him to understand Mr. Wesley's plans, and to assist in managing affairs after his death as few men could, and also to become his most reliable biographer.

MR. WESLEY ORDAINING MINISTERS.

From the last-named conference the work went on, attended with its usual labors, difficulties, and successes, till 1784, when circumstances seemed to require decisive action. Independency and ordination had been long urged by many, and opposed by others. Mr. Wesley, in his lingering attachment to the established Church, though he regarded the apostolic succession as a "fable," had hesitated to exercise the right of ordaining ministers for the societies which he had been the means of organizing. He feared that in thus openly taking issue with the Church he would lose more for his cause than he would gain. But the time had come when he must take the responsibility of providing the sacraments for his followers, especially in America, or they would provide for themselves. The bishops of the English Church would do nothing to relieve the case. They were generally without God themselves, and hated Methodism little less than the mobs they incited to destroy it. So, after due consultation with

Mr. Fletcher and other pious churchmen, he ordained Dr. Coke superintendent of the Methodist societies in America, September 2, 1784, and Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey presbyters, to accompany and co-operate with him. His brother Charles was, of course, opposed to the whole proceeding, and remonstrated, saying, "Alas! what trouble are you preparing for yourself, as well as for me and for your oldest, truest, best friends! Before you have quite broken down the bridge, stop, and consider! If your sons have no regard for you, have some for yourself. Go to your grave in peace; at least, suffer me to go first before this ruin is under your hand." His grief was intense, and, it seems to us, equally ridiculous; and perhaps it was well that he did depart in peace soon after. The ice being thus broken, and nobody harmed, Mr. Wesley ordained several others of his *lay* preachers for Scotland, the West Indies, America, and the home service, limiting the latter to the administration of the sacraments in cases of necessity; and we have yet to learn that their priestly services were not just as efficient and acceptable to God and the people as those of any bishop or pope. If great and good men can be so enslaved to a mere *fiction* of Romanism, how can we blame the ignorant masses who rely on other *fables* for their salvation from the same source?

ANOTHER EMERGENCY PROVIDED FOR.

These proceedings removed one great source of disturbance and danger to the societies. Another occasion of solicitude was found in the advanced age of Mr. Wesley, who could not be expected to con-

tinue much longer at the head of his multiplying followers. Who was to take his place without his influence? (and no man could have that) was a question which occupied, not his attention only, but that of the preachers, who already trembled for the unity of the body when Mr. Wesley should be called to his reward.

From references already made to Mr. Fletcher, the reader would naturally infer that he occupied a high place in the affections of the whole connection. This was so; in proof of which, Mr. Wesley was frequently solicited to secure him for his successor. Accordingly, in January, 1773, he wrote him a very emphatic letter, urging him by high considerations to enter into the itinerant work, and be prepared to succeed him in office. Mr. Fletcher replied with his usual modesty, declining the overture, but promising such assistance as he might be able to afford in certain contingencies. This was construed into encouragement by some of the preachers, and Mr. Fletcher was addressed a second time; but to no purpose. He was a great man, an excellent scholar, and an eminent Christian; but he was not probably "born to command." He could not fancy the position offered him. "I am," said he facetiously to a friend, "like one of your casks of wine: I am good for nothing till I *settle*."

Methodism had found its way to America some time before. It now appeared in the Isle of Man, in Holland, and other places, and Mr. Wesley presided over the whole, traveling from country to country in his regular course with the same apparent ease and energy he had displayed in former years. But the

question must be settled, "What is going to be done when Mr. Wesley dies?" Most of the trust deeds secured the right of appointing the preachers to the several chapels to him, some made no provision for their appointment after his demise, while many vested the right to appoint in the conference. But who were the conference? As before stated, it was composed of such preachers as Mr. Wesley called together to counsel with him, and none others. Here was a difficulty which many feared, and some hoped, would prove fatal to the union of the societies.

To avoid so great a calamity Mr. Wesley took legal advice, and prepared a "Deed of Declaration," constituting one hundred preachers, whom he named therein, the conference of the people called Methodists, making provision for the filling of vacancies occasioned by death, superannuation, or excision; and defining their duties and powers so as to secure the occupancy of the meeting-houses, and other society property, to the Methodists, according to the original design, and preserve the itinerancy forever unimpaired among them. This deed being recorded in His Majesty's High Court of Chancery, in the year 1784, the question of *authority* and *government* was settled. The deed created some little uneasiness among certain preachers not named in it, particularly such as had left the work like Dr. Whitehead, and were hoping to obtain a settlement, as did Mr. Wesley's book-steward, in a Congregational Methodist Church. But in general it gave great satisfaction. Mr. Wesley's motives for this measure we find stated by himself in these words:

"Without some authentic deed, fixing the meaning

of the term, the moment I died the conference had been nothing. Therefore, any of the proprietors of the land on which our preaching-houses were built might have seized them for their own use, and there would have been none to hinder them, for the conference would have been nobody—a mere empty name.

“You see, then, in all the pains I have taken about this necessary deed, I have been laboring, not for myself (I have no interest therein), but for the whole body of Methodists, in order to fix them upon such a foundation as is likely to stand as long as the sun and moon endure. That is, if they continue to walk by faith, and show forth their faith by their works; otherwise, I pray God to root out the memorial of them from the earth.”

THE WISDOM OF THE MEASURE DEMONSTRATED.

The remarks of Mr. Moore on the importance of this “Deed” are full of sound sense. He says:

“That men (not a few of whom had departed from the society, and some had been expelled from it), should, merely, by virtue of their *legal* authority over the premises, appoint preachers to feed and guide the flock, exhibited a distressing prospect. Even where the trustees continued members of the society, and attached to its interests, what could be expected, in a matter of such vital concern, from men so much engaged in worldly business? This has often been proved in religious communities. It was the chief cause of the decline of religion among the latter Puritans: their lay elders assumed after some time, the whole authority. From this pro-

ceeded that worldly spirit and political zeal which so greatly dishonored that work in its last days; and which had previously overthrown both Church and State.

“The evil showed itself in prominent overt acts, previous to this period. Mr. Wesley, having striven to prevail on some trustees in Yorkshire to settle their chapels, so that the people might continue to hear the same truths, and be under the same discipline as heretofore, was assailed with calumny, and with the most determined opposition, as though he intended to make the chapels his own! Another set of trustees, in the same county, absolutely refused to settle a lately erected chapel; and, in the issue, engaged Mr. Wesley’s book-steward in London, who had been an itinerant preacher, to come to them as their minister. This man, however, was ‘*wise in his generation,*’ and insisted upon having an income of sixty pounds per annum, with the chapel house to live in, settled upon him during his life, before he would relinquish his place under Mr. Wesley. What will not party spirit do? I was a witness, when, after Mr. Wesley’s death, it was found that the preachers continued united and faithful in their calling, how deeply those men repented of their conduct in this instance. In vain they represented to the man of their unhappy choice how lamentably their congregations had declined, and how hardly they could sustain the expenses they had incurred. The answer was short: *They might employ other preachers if they should think it proper; but the dwelling-house and the stated income belonged to him.*”

OBJECTIONS TO THE DEED EXPLAINED.

“We need not wonder that Dr. Whitehead should speak with such deep concern, and indulge such a spirit of calumny, concerning this important measure of settling the chapels. The doctor, and many others who had departed from the work, had, through that wise measure, but little prospect of succeeding, like his friend the book-steward, to occupy chapels built for the people by Mr. Wesley’s influence and the labor of the preachers. The favor of those trustees who might be disposed to forget their sacred obligations, and incur such an awful responsibility, held out but little hope to such men, now that a legal definition was given to the phrase—THE CONFERENCE; and, in fact, every appeal made to equity has fully succeeded, on this very ground.

“In that day of uncertainty and surmise, there were not wanting some, even among the itinerant preachers, who entertained fears respecting a settlement of this kind. One of those preachers, and of considerable eminence, attacked the Deed of Settlement, and declared that Mr. Wesley might as justly place all the dwelling-houses, barns, workshops, etc., in which we had preached for so many years, under the authority of the conference, as he had done the chapels; and that he thus assumed an authority the Lord had not given him. This seemed far too strong to be generally received, and it was quickly answered. A preacher, in reply, observed, ‘that, certainly, there was as much justice in the one case as the other, provided those dwelling-houses, barns, work-shops, etc., had been built in consequence of the preaching, and

by the subscriptions of the connection; and in order that those erections might continue to be used for the purposes for which they were thus built!" This closed the debate for that time."

MR. WESLEY'S LETTER TO THE CONFERENCE.

To give this instrument a happier operation and more general acceptability, Mr. Wesley left the following letter to be read at the first session of the conference after his decease:

"TO THE METHODIST CONFERENCE.

"CHESTER, *April 7, 1785.*

"MY DEAR BRETHREN,—Some of our traveling preachers have expressed a fear that, after my decease, you would exclude them either from preaching in connection with you, or from some other privilege which they now enjoy. I know no other way to prevent any such inconvenience than to leave these, my last words, with you.

"I beseech you, by the mercies of God, that you never avail yourselves of the 'Deed of Declaration' to assume any superiority over your brethren; but let all things go on among those itinerants who choose to remain together exactly in the same manner as when I was with you, so far as circumstances will permit.

"In particular, I beseech you, if you ever loved me, and if you now love God and your brethren, to have no respect of persons in stationing the preachers, in choosing children for the Kingswood school, in disposing of the yearly contribution and the preachers' fund, or any other public money; but do all things with a single eye, as I have done from the beginning. Go on thus, doing all things without predjudice or partiality, and God will be with you to the end. JOHN WESLEY."

CONFERENCE ACTION ON THE SUBJECT.

This letter was read to the conference, according to the writer's design, and responded to by resolutions pledging that body to entire acquiescence in its

suggestions. But the effect was not all that was desired. Though it allayed the fears of individuals, it did not endear the government provided for in the "Deed" to all parties. Some had little *fondness* for the national Church, and wished to have all connection sundered, that they might enter the lists against it. The heads of others were quite turned in favor of *ecclesiastical democracy*. They could away with no system that did not eschew all distinctions, while a considerable number of excellent men preferred something a little different from the existing plan. The matter was talked over privately, and a private convention or two was called, in which systems were suggested and discussed, and in which, too, strong preferences were expressed for our own. But the secret was soon out, and raised an excitement which alarmed the friends of the cause exceedingly. But the next conference, by the timely aid of their "Deed," firmly resisted all attempts to effect a change in the constitution, in the face of great and good men whose names are still cherished with veneration.

THE DEED A GRAND SUCCESS.

Thus, that instrument has ever proved itself the sheet-anchor of Mr. Wesley's incomparable plan of itinerancy, and of the true interests of Methodism in every emergency. If the preachers have at any time inclined to diverge from it, it has restrained them, and it has compelled them to discountenance and suppress all tendencies to revolution; so that the designs of Mr. Wesley and his coadjutors have been steadily carried out. And, so far as we can now

see, they must continue to be to the end of time, unless the conference shall apostatize from God, and become indisposed to work the system; or the legislative or judiciary department of the country shall prove recreant to duty, and attempt to *mend* what it ought only to *protect*. But we think there is no immediate occasion for alarm. The experiments which have been made in vain at all these points, form ground of confidence in the integrity both of the conference and the judiciary.

Hence, instead of the societies being scattered at the death of Mr. Wesley, as was anticipated, they struck their roots still deeper, and extended their branches wider. Says Mr. Jackson: "Extensive revivals broke out in several places; new societies were formed, and older ones were quickened and augmented; and many chapels, of various sizes, were erected and enlarged. Within ten years after Mr. Wesley's death the societies were increased in Great Britain alone more than *forty thousand members*, and in twenty years they were increased upward of *one hundred thousand*."

CHAPTER VIII.

MR. WESLEY'S LABORS—OTHER DEPARTURES FROM THE
CHURCH—WESLEY'S LAST CONFERENCE—HIS DEATH—
STATISTICS OF HIS WORK—OTHER RESULTS OF HIS
LABORS.

HAVING provided the sacraments for Methodists of all lands, and for their self-government after his departure, it would not have been unreasonable if Mr. Wesley had taken life a little easier, and lingered about his beloved home. But these wise arrangements seem not to have relieved him in the least; he moved right on in his wonted course, preaching, writing, and itinerating as before, and all the more as he saw the time of his departure approaching. On entering upon his *eighty-fifth* year he makes his first acknowledgment of decline, confessing to some failure of sight, activity, memory, etc. A year later he was still more infirm; but in 1790 he wrote: "I am now an old man, decayed from head to foot." But still he worked on during all this time, traversing England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, preaching to immense throngs in chapels and churches and in the open air, until he could not see to read the hymns, or even stand up without support. And his preaching was as powerful as it had ever been, producing all the mighty results of other days.

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OF HIS LATER CONFERENCES.

The conference of 1781 was remarkable for originating what is generally called "The Cabinet." Presiding elders were then unknown. The Cabinet was composed of Mr. Fletcher, Coke, and four others, who were invited by Mr. Wesley to meet him every evening for consultation.

This conference also determined to receive no married preachers on account of the difficulty of supporting families, if enough others offered. Besides, the preachers were prohibited to publish any thing without Mr. Wesley's consent; and all the profits of their publications were to go into the common stock.

The next conference brought up an old issue, the like of which has appeared several times since. The trustees at Bristol insisted on choosing their own preachers. Wesley would not consent, because it would ruin the itinerancy; and the conference sustained him, and resolved to take a collection in all the societies to erect a new chapel. But the trustees surrendered, as they generally do in such cases, if not sustained by the preachers.

A more important event of this conference was its reception of Adam Clarke, whose fame is in all the world, as a scholar and commentator. Being sent to Norwich Circuit, he preached four hundred and fifty sermons in about eleven months, traveling a circuit of two hundred and sixty miles extent, largely on foot, with his saddle-bags on his back, there being but one horse for four preachers. His youth and talents commanded general attention; and

many bowed before the Lord. The next year he received on trial a shoemaker's apprentice, by the name of Samuel Drew, who afterward distinguished himself as a metaphysical writer and a defender of Methodism. Young Clarke soon advanced to the front rank of Wesleyan preachers, and astonished the world by his wisdom and labors. Though his sermons were often very elaborate and popular, he always preached *extempore*. He simply filled himself with his subject, and then talked from that fullness to his admiring hearers, which is a common-sense way of producing conviction.

The conferences of those times were practically very much like annual conferences of the present day. That of 1784 received eight preachers on trial, twenty-five into full connection, and dismissed five by location and two by death, stationing one hundred and ninety-seven among 49,219 members. The total membership, including 14,988 in America, was 64,207. This conference was a critical one, having to set in judgment on Mr. Wesley's "Deed of Declaration." Human nature was then about the same it is now, and was not always sanctified by grace even among preachers, who were bold to face mobs, and die for Christ and his cause. The Deed named one hundred men who were to constitute the legal conference at Mr. Wesley's death, and exercise jurisdiction over the connection, under certain restrictions. But there were several good men who were mortified that they were not among the number, and, therefore, combined to resist the measure. The debate that ensued was very sharp, and involved personalities that seemed quite threatening, and

probably would have resulted in something more serious had it not been for the sainted Fletcher, who was present and poured oil on the troubled waters. Standing as he did on the brink of the grave, and filled with the Spirit as few men have ever been, he threw his whole soul into the contest, pleading for peace. "Never," says one who was present, "never, while memory holds her seat, shall I forget with what ardor and earnestness Mr. Fletcher expostulated, even on his knees, both with Wesley and the preachers. To the former, he said: 'My father! my father! they have offended, but they are your children.' To the latter he exclaimed: 'My brethren! my brethren! he is your father!' and then portraying the work in which they were unitedly engaged, fell again on his knees, and, with meek fervor and devotion, engaged in prayer. The conference was bathed in tears." The Deed was confirmed. Several of the objectors yielded, though they never forgot the offense complained of; but three or four seceded and joined other bodies, without improving their religious feelings or social fortunes. It takes more grace to bear a *slight*, real or imaginary, than to face a mob. Of course, these men went off complaining of Mr. Wesley and the "Deed," which led the next conference to issue a paper, assuming the responsibility of the transaction.

ANOTHER STEP FROM THE CHURCH.

The conference of 1786 brought up the old question of the relation of Methodists to the Church, which was settled as before, except that permission was granted to hold service in the chapels during

Church hours where the clergy were notoriously wicked or dangerously heretical, and where Methodists were not well accommodated with Church service, thus paving the way to that independency which was certain to come not long hence. Another good thing done at this conference was to receive William Bramwell on trial, whose remarkable history is familiar. He was not distinguished for learning, like some of his predecessors, so much as by his power in prayer and in bringing sinners to Christ. When he was converted he says "heaven came down to earth. It came to my soul. My soul was then all wonder, love, and praise." And he retained it, and led multitudes to the same blessed experience.

The work of God so increased, Mr. Wesley ventured another step away from the assumptions of the Church, and ordained three presbyters *for England*, as he had ordained others for Scotland and America, and then ordained one of them, Alexander Mather, superintendent or bishop. Hardly a year passed when the wickedness of the Church authorities and the growth of his societies did not imperatively demand some new departure from the establishment.

WESLEY'S LAST CONFERENCE LABORS.

The last conference he attended was held at Bristol, July 27, 1790, where he organized his first "band" and erected his first chapel some fifty years before. *Now*, he was the acknowledged and beloved father bishop of some 540 traveling preachers, 1,200 local preachers, and 134,599 members, scattered among the nations, but fully organized, and forming the nucleus of the largest Protestant Church

in the world. His parting with the Conference was deeply affecting. Says one of his preachers: "I parted with Mr. Wesley until the resurrection of the just. He appeared very feeble. His eye-sight had failed so much that he could not see to give out the hymns; yet his voice was strong, his spirit remarkably lively, and the powers of his mind and his love toward his fellow-creatures were as bright and as ardent as ever."

His signature to the minutes of the conference, *fac-similes* of which may be seen on our third page, shows that his writing days were past. In making his last entry in his cash account, a little after, he adds in an almost illegible hand and in a manifest numerical error: "For upward of eighty-six years I have kept my accounts exactly. I will not attempt it any longer, being satisfied with the continual conviction that I save all I can and give all I can—that is, all I have."

But still he went on with his work, using up the few days and the little strength that remained to him for the glory of God and the good of his people. We find him again, a month later, at Bristol, holding a "watch-meeting" till midnight; then in London, Cornwall, the Isle of Wight, and back to Bristol, preaching at five o'clock in the morning, and elsewhere, preaching in the streets, burning with fever, closing his full ministry at Leatherhead, February 23, 1791, with the text, "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near," showing that his early passion to save sinners was "strong in death." "On that day," says Dr. Stevens, "fell from his dying grasp

a trumpet of the truth which had sounded the everlasting Gospel oftener and more effectually than that of any other man for sixteen hundred years. The Reformers of Germany, Switzerland, France, and England wrought their great work more by the pen than by the voice. It has been admitted that Whitefield preached more eloquently, with few exceptions to larger assemblies, and traveled more extensively (though not more miles) than Wesley, within the same limits of time; but Wesley survived him more than twenty years, and his power has been more productive and permanent. Whitefield preached eighteen thousand sermons—more than ten a week for his thirty-four years of ministerial life. Wesley preached forty-two thousand four hundred after his return from Georgia—more than fifteen a week.”

HIS DESCENT TO THE GRAVE.

From this point he descended to the grave as such a man should, resting on the sure foundation indicated by the lines,

“I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me,”

repeating them often when near his end. He was also filled with praise, and tried to sing,

“I’ll praise my Maker,” etc.,

when he was too far gone to articulate. “The best of all is, God is with us,” was one of his dying utterances. March 2, 1791, in the morning, he exclaimed to the group of loving friends around his bed, “Farewell!” and passed away without a struggle

to his everlasting reward, in the *eighty-eighth* year of his age, and the *sixty-fourth* of his ministry.

APPRECIATED AT LAST.

The latter part of Mr. Wesley's career differed very widely, in one respect, from the former. His early travels were constantly interrupted by mobs and other persecutions, which not only embarrassed his work, but often *endangered* his life; but God permitted him to live to command the respect and veneration of his greatest *enemies*. His old age was honored with all the attention that was safe for any man to receive. "The churches in London were generally closed against him in 1738; but now he had more applications to preach in those very churches, for the benefit of public charities, than he could possibly comply with. His visits to *many* places in the country created a sort of general festival. The people crowded around him as he passed along the streets; the windows were filled with eager gazers; the children waited 'to catch the good man's smile,' which the overflowing benignity of his heart rendered him ever willing to bestow. When he first went into Cornwall, accompanied by John Nelson, he plucked blackberries from the hedges to allay the cravings of hunger, and slept upon boards, having his saddle-bags for a pillow, till the bones cut through his skin. Now he was received, in that county especially, as an angel of God. On the 17th of August, 1789, on visiting Falmouth, he says: 'The last time I was here, above forty years ago, I was taken prisoner by an immense mob, gaping and roaring like lions; but how is the tide turned! High

and low now lined the street from one end of the town to the other, out of stark love, gaping and staring as if the king were going by.'” (Wesley’s Works, Vol. IV, p. 728.)

Thus, integrity to God is sometimes honored even in this world. Whatever injustice, prejudice, and calumny may heap upon our names for a time, if we take it patiently, and plod on in the way of well-doing, redemption will come, and Haman shall be compelled by his own convictions to honor the same Mordecai he would have hanged.

NUMERICAL PROGRESS OF THE SOCIETIES.

The first attempt to take a census of the societies was made, as before stated, in 1766; but for several reasons it was very imperfectly done. Subsequent reports were more complete. Believing that they may be profitable to the reader in several respects, we present the following tabular statement. It must be remembered, however, that it gives but a very imperfect view of the good effected. Much of the time Mr. Wesley would not allow his preachers to form societies at all, but required them to urge their converts into the Established Church, or some other. In many cases these converts doubtless retained their formal connection with the Established Church without entering into Mr. Wesley’s societies at all. Though Methodists in principle they did not become so by name; and yet they owed their spiritual life to the preaching of Mr. Wesley and his followers. The reckoning of names in the table which we give here is only of those enrolled on the class-books. Still the showing suggests important lessons

concerning the work, which may be turned to practical account.

TABULAR EXHIBIT.

Date of Report.....	Preachers Appointed.	Numbers in Society.....	Increase.....	Benevolent Collections.	Date of Report.....	Preachers Appointed.	Numbers in Society.....	Increase.....	Benevolent Collections.
1767	54	25,911	.....	.....	1779	167	42,486	2,397	\$4,588
1768	64	27,341	1,430	\$28,260*	1780	171	43,830	1,344	5,411
1769	70	28,263	922	.....	1781	178	44,461	631	3,336
1770	83	29,466	1,143	.....	1782	183	45,823	1,362	6,735
1771	125	30,338	872	9,476	1783	191	45,995	162	6,897
1772	132	31,984	1,546	16,397	1784	197	49,219	3,224	5,740
1773	137	33,272	1,288	12,336	1785	211	53,839	4,620	9,781
1774	143	35,612	2,340	4,331	1786	238	60,329	6,490	9,525
1775	152	38,145	2,533	4,636	1787	261	64,980	4,651	10,807
1776	175	39,826	1,681	5,077	1788	298	70,614	5,634	11,640
1777	154	38,274	1,552†	2,250‡	1789	288	74,254	3,640	11,630
1778	164	40,089	1,715	5,365	1790	313	76,968	2,714	13,687

Thus we see the progress of the cause was not rapid, but *steady* and *solid*. Both preachers and members were received with great care, and dismissed with little ceremony when found incurably wanting in character or usefulness.

OTHER BENEFITS OF THE WESLEYAN MOVEMENT.

Though these figures indicate remarkable success, we are to look elsewhere for the grandest results of the Wesleyan movement. It revolutionized the theology, ecclesiasticism, humanity, benevolence, and religious worship of the nations. Its early sympathy for prisoners, soldiers, sailors, slaves, and the poor,

* These collections were for different objects, such as education, chapel debts, etc.

† A decrease—report from America not included as before, on account of the war.

‡ The Chapel Fund collection omitted this year to assist in building the City Road Chapel.

laid the foundation of all the improvements that have occurred in the condition of these classes since the dark days of its first startling utterances. The "horrible" decree of reprobation is not calculated to excite sympathy for the oppressed. People are not apt to be better than their God. Methodism, presenting the God of love, "manifest in the flesh" of his son Jesus Christ, who lived a suffering life for fallen man, and died on the cross for his redemption, introduced the true model of Christianity and humanity which has since influenced the morals, religion, legislation, and social life of the millions,—abolished slavery in its worst forms, and elevated the unfortunate to a better condition than they ever enjoyed since the world began. The humanity of to-day, of which we may be proud when we contemplate it in contrast with the tyranny and cruelty of a century and a half ago, is but the outgrowth of sentiments and practices set on foot by the Holy Club at Oxford, and afterward developed by their labors and sufferings, in connection with their friends, the immortal Howard, Wilberforce, and others, who caught their benevolent spirit. Many living Methodist preachers can remember when the dark pall of "election and reprobation" hung over this country, paralyzing all motives to Christian enterprise. They were met every-where by the defenders of the "decrees" and ordered off as heretics, and intruders. But having Wesley's "Doctrinal Tracts," and Fletcher's "Checks," in their saddle-bags, and the Scriptures in their memory and hearts, they entered the arena and put their learned traducers to flight. Where are these doctrines now? Who preaches them? Seeing

that the people would not hear them, they were partially concealed by various forms of "New Divinity." Being driven from these intrenchments, they were left to slumber in abandoned creeds, and musty volumes, which are seldom read; and salvation by faith, free and full, is now generally offered to all sinners as the lawful purchase of the atonement, and that by the very Churches which once insisted on "election and reprobation" as the cardinal "doctrines of grace."

Methodism has also shed new light upon the doctrine of salvation by faith, dimly apprehended by Luther but left so complicated with ceremonial conditions as not to be practicable to most minds. Wesley was never more anxious or sincere than when he went to Georgia to convert the Indians; but he was still in spiritual darkness. He had prayed and fasted enough to be converted a thousand times; but he had done it in obedience to the prevailing sentiments of the English Church inherited from the Papacy. Romanism puts its victims upon a course of self-mortification, terminating with pardon from the priest. The English Church did the same, all except the pardon, and that it modestly left to God, without any settled theory as to whether it would be pronounced in this life, and if so, what evidence of it, if any, would be given. Wesley thus sought salvation by works, and with great uncertainty as to the result. He sought it long and earnestly, as did his brother, and his friend, Mr. Whitefield. Calvinism was more explicit on two points. It claimed that the elect could not be saved from all sin, or even know that they were pardoned till death, so that the highest

possible state of grace was little more than a perpetual anxiety

But when Wesley condescended to consult the poor unecclesiastical Moravians, they taught him the way of the Lord more perfectly, whereupon he sought salvation by *faith*, and obtained *pardon*, and the witness of the Spirit that he was born of God. Thus he came to know the meaning of the word salvation, the method of obtaining it, and the proper evidence of its accomplishment, and that it is for him that believeth in Jesus, irrespective of Church or priest. With this discovery he went forth and accomplished the great work, an outline of which we have attempted to give.

In prosecuting this enterprise many new expedients were forced upon him, which he reluctantly, but wisely entertained, and experimented into success. Others were divinely suggested to his mind which appeared more appropriate, and were adopted for himself and the Christian public of all nations. Among these are lay preaching and lay prayer-meetings, two marvelous innovations upon "Church Order;" annual and quarterly conferences, love-feasts, class-meetings, watch-meetings, extemporaneous praying and preaching, tract distribution, evening meetings, devotional congregational singing, free Sunday and week-day schools, with many others, most of which have become quite common throughout Protestant Christendom. When the Methodists first went to rigid New England, there was no provision in the Churches for evening meetings. Lay prayer-meetings for the masses were unknown. The first public speakings of Methodist women were

thought to be an outrage on St. Paul, and common decency, and their devotional songs were pronounced a disorder. But now, all these things are generally approved and practiced.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

We speak of these particulars not to glorify Mr. Wesley or Methodism. God called him to the work he did as certainly as he called Moses, or Nehemiah, or Paul, to their respective undertakings, and, no doubt, led him in the way he should go, for the good of the world. His works praise him, but God more, to whom be all the glory now and forever. If he was a "Pope" as has been charged, he was one for God, and exercised authority over those whom God gave him, and who pleased to follow him. No successor has ever possessed the authority he had, for no one has occupied the same providential relation to the work. He was the *father* of it, and sacrificed himself and all he had, or could honestly obtain, for its welfare. And this personal sacrifice was the real secret of his power over his preachers. Had he insisted on a salary of five hundred pounds a year, a very moderate sum for a bishop, then or now, or even *accepted* it, his authority would have been discarded. But he accepted nothing but labors and sacrifices more abundant. He did not, could not drive his helpers; he led them, was foremost in the loss of all things. This was also the secret of Asbury's authority. He never imposed heavier burdens on his preachers than he bore himself. His heroic addresses to the young ministers were always backed by more heroic deeds. And this is the legitimate way to

command authority in a free country, and especially in the work of God.

The thing that should engross us, who have been especially profited by the labors of such leaders as John Wesley and Francis Asbury, is to follow them as they followed Christ, and not go back to the beggarly elements of ceremonial or official religion, from which they delivered us. Their aim was to *save sinners*. For this they lived, labored, and sacrificed every personal power and interest. Should their tens of thousands of ministerial followers do as much, Methodism would not be long in taking the world for Christ.

One further remark, and we pass on to other scenes. The Methodist system of government and Christian labor has commanded the admiration of our wisest men; and yet it has been, and will be, severely criticised. But whether good or bad, nearly every feature of it has come down to us from Mr. Wesley, and has been proved by the infallible test of experiment. It was constructed for the direction and government of live, consecrated men. Others *can not* like it. The moment it shall be modified to please worldly men, whether of the pulpit or the pew, its efficiency is gone. Times and customs may change, but this system, operated in the spirit which gave it birth, will never be found wanting in success. It may be modified, and will be, but so long as that modification shall impose more self-denial and labor on the leaders, as well as others, the cause will not suffer.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SITUATION STATED—ISSUES INVOLVED—DEMANDS
MADE—PLAN OF PACIFICATION—PROGRESS
OF THE CAUSE.

MR. WESLEY having finished his work, all eyes were now turned toward his governmental successors, the “legal hundred.” His system had worked well under his own wise and fatherly administration; but whether it would succeed as well, or at all, under the new arrangements, was a question about which there were various opinions. A few of the preachers, not named in the “Deed of Declaration,” were quite willing that it should prove a failure, that they might obtain a permanent settlement in some one of the societies. The majority, however, were intensely anxious that it should succeed and accomplish all that its lamented projector and his advisers had hoped. The first session of the legal hundred was, therefore, anticipated with profound solicitude. “Pray, pray, pray!” rung out through the connection from the pen of Joseph Bradford; and Mr. Entwisle expressed a common feeling when he wrote, “My soul trembles for the ark of the Lord.”

The danger was greatly argued by the agitated state of public opinion, growing out of the French Revolution, then pouring forth its torrents of

infidelity and unrestricted liberalism. Some of the preachers had become infected with the lowest kind of Republicanism, and were disposed, like Alexander Kilham, who soon after led the first succession, to throw off the Wesleyan yoke. Pamphlets, circulars, and appeals, representing different views and projects, were sent forth in every direction. Churchmen and dissenters took a lively interest in the discussion, hoping to break up the connection, and divide the spoils between them, a policy which is not entirely unknown in this country.

Soon after the death of Wesley, Rev. William Thompson called a meeting of preachers for consultation, to make arrangements for the coming conference. This led to conflicting meetings and discussions which did not improve the prospect of peace.

Dr. Coke, sharing the common solicitude, hastened home from America, to be suspected and accused of improper motives in making his appearance just at that time.

THE ISSUES INVOLVED.

The tenacity with which Mr. Wesley adhered to the established Church has already been mentioned. He required nothing as a condition of membership in his societies, nor, indeed, allowed any conduct among his adherents which was "inconsistent with their relations to the Church or conformity to its lawful requisitions. He held no service in the chapels during the time of regular service in the church, except under peculiar circumstances, but attended that service himself, and enjoined upon his followers

to do the same; nor would he allow the preachers to administer the sacraments, but required his followers to receive the communion in the Episcopal Church. His preaching-places must not be called churches, but *chapels*; his helpers, not clergymen, but *lay preachers*; and the assemblies of his people, mere *societies*.

But he did not maintain this course without difficulty, nor without strong apprehensions that something like a separation would ultimately take place. The repulsion of Methodists and Methodist preachers from the sacrament, and the infliction of cruel persecution from a domineering *priesthood*, created a general distrust of the piety of its incumbents, and a consequent disinclination to attend upon their ministry. Of course, there was a loud call for the sacraments in the chapels, which could not be fully answered without seeming to dissent from the establishment. Mr. Wesley's personal influence went far to moderate this demand, but was hardly sufficient to allay it. At all events, he found it necessary to administer the sacrament himself in some of the chapels, and to secure similar service from several others of the regular clergy who were interested in his enterprise, and finally to ordain certain of his preachers for the purpose.

This was the state of things at his death, when all eyes turned to the conference for some accommodation. To prevent the administration of the sacraments to the people by their own preachers was impossible. The conference had no power to do it had it been disposed. "The question," says Mr. Watson, "stood on the plain, practical ground,

‘Shall the societies be obliged, from their conscientious scruples, to neglect an ordinance of God; or shall we drive them to the Dissenters, whose peculiar doctrines they do not believe; or shall we, under certain regulations, accede to their wishes?’ ”

THE FIRST CONFERENCE.

This conference, the forty-eighth from the beginning, met at Manchester, July 26, 1791, and proceeded to business with the coolness and caution the situation seemed to demand. Rev. William Thompson, a wise, devout, and dignified Irishman, was elected president, and Dr. Coke secretary. There were about three hundred preachers present, all anxious, and generally solemn and prayerful.

The first business, of course, was to read Mr. Wesley’s letter, left as “his last words” to the legal “hundred,” which we have already recorded—a most wise and apostolic document, that it will be well for all bishops and conferences to keep in mind. This done, the conference agreed to grant the preachers in full connection equal privileges with themselves, so far as the Deed of Declaration would allow; to follow the plan left by Wesley; restricted the appointment of preachers to the same circuit to two years, except in special cases of “revival;” appointed Dr. Coke to preside at the Irish Conference, as he had done before; provided for various committees to co-operate with themselves in the management and prosecution of the work; pledged Mr. Wilberforce their co-operation in his efforts to abolish the slave-trade; arranged the appointments and adjourned.

Thus the trying ordeal seemed to have been

passed in safety; but the conference did not clearly touch the questions in dispute. Its pledge "to follow Mr. Wesley's plan" was susceptible of different constructions, which all parties explained to suit their respective opinions and purposes. Some thought it meant that they would adhere to the Church; others, that it favored dissent. Hanby, Taylor, and Cownley, whom Wesley had authorized to administer the sacraments, went on doing so, much to the annoyance of the opposing party, some of whom left the connection. Kilham rushed into the controversy, insisting on the largest liberty, pronouncing his Churchish opponents "bigots," their course "trimming between God and the world," and their arguments "political," "carnal, and sold under sin." Party feeling ran very high, and portended serious results.

OTHER ACTION ON THE SUBJECT.

The second conference met in London, July 31, 1792, and elected Alexander Mather, whom Wesley had ordained superintendent, to preside, and Dr. Coke secretary. Mr. Kilham was soon arraigned and censured for the severity of his writings, and barely escaped expulsion by making some little acknowledgment, though ably defended by Bradburn, the "Demosthenes of Methodism."

Some minor matters being disposed of, *the* question of the day—the sacraments—was introduced. Petitions from the people, calling for deliverance from bondage to the established Church, were presented in large numbers, and not a few, equally emphatic, remonstrating against any change. The

conference was unwilling, at first, to do any thing on the subject. They had always been taught to regard themselves as a *society* in the *Church*, and not a Church of themselves. With this understanding many of their most wealthy and pious members had joined, and were at that moment holding important offices of trust. They still loved the Church as their mother, and looked only to her for the valid administration of the ordinances. The conference was aware how the change demanded would affect such people, and felt compelled to move cautiously; but their prudent tardiness and delay did not quiet the public mind. Discussion waxed warmer and warmer. The leading men in the conference were on opposite sides, and the prospect for peace was dubious. A majority, however, agreed that the preachers might administer the ordinances where a majority in the society was in favor of their doing so. This gave the High-church party great offense, and created no little disturbance. They then retracted, and allowed the sacraments only where there was *no* objection; but this increased the difficulty, as it gave the power to a single Churchman to bind all the rest of the society. The contention became intolerable. *High-church* trustees shut several of the chapels against *Low-church* preachers; congregations were divided; many seceded from the society, and things looked threatening indeed. What could be done? The conference was as much divided as the people. Mr. Benson was High-church; Mr. Moore, Mr. Wesley's biographer, was Low-church; and both had been in the same circuit, serving different parties to the controversy.

Thus the storm raged from year to year, but still the work of God prospered. The conference of 1795 opened under critical circumstances. Excitement had reached the culminating point. Argument was exhausted. All seemed to feel that the decisions of this session would decide the fate of the Wesleyan body; and yet it was obvious that no action, however wise, would please all, and prevent a separation of some from the Connection. The alternation of hope and fear could be distinguished in every countenance. Many a pious heart trembled for the ark of God. Trustees and stewards from all parts of the kingdom were assembled in the lobby, to speak for themselves and their constituents, and by all lawful means to persuade the conference to favor the preferences of their respective parties. Some would secede if the conference should do thus and thus; and others would secede if it should not. The conference heard all; and, fully impressed with the delicacy of their position, entered upon their work like men of God, determined to take no advantage that did not belong to them, and come to some decision that would end the controversy forever, if possible.

HOW THE MATTER WAS FINALLY SETTLED.

It was first agreed to refer the whole matter to a "*committee of nine*," to be chosen by ballot. This was the fairest way to choose them, and yet it was to be feared that in this way they would all be on one side, as it was evident the conference was not equally balanced. But no; there was too much magnanimity in the body for this. All seemed to

feel that both sides ought to be represented, and that minorities are to be respected. The ballotings resulted in the appointment of a mixed committee, consisting of Rev Joseph Bradford, John Pawson, Alexander Mather, Thomas Coke, William Thompson, Samuel Bradburn, Joseph Benson, Henry Moore, and Adam Clarke. After sitting six evenings, three and a half hours each evening, in close deliberation, the committee presented a "Plan of Pacification;" so accommodating all parties, and requiring concessions from all, that it was difficult to tell which party in the committee had prevailed. The truth was (be it said to the praise of God, and to the credit of their hearts as well as their heads), *both prevailed*. Their paramount interest was to *save the cause*; and the matter in dispute being prudential arrangement, they acquiesced in a compromise that required concessions both ways, and still gave both sides their own way to an important extent. The conference adopted the report with great unanimity, by slightly altering one article, after which it very harmoniously appended two or three more, and sent it forth among the societies. Few could say it was just what they wanted; but nearly all the real Methodists, embracing the trustees, stewards, and private members, acquiesced in it as a plan of peculiar wisdom, dropped their controversies, and united anew in the work of God.

It is not necessary to state all the provisions of this plan. It is enough to say that baptism and the Lord's-supper, together with service in the chapels during the time of Church service, were provided for on the condition that a majority of the stewards and

leaders should approve of having them administered. But it did not bind the conscience of any one. If a majority should favor the sacraments, etc., according to the "*plan*," it did not bind the minority to attend upon them. Members could go to Church as before, and those who preferred it might receive baptism and the sacrament at chapel. Was not this kind? Was it not just? And was it not Wesleyan too? We have not a doubt of it. Mr. Wesley loved the Church, but he loved the souls of men better. He would not separate from her any further than he found it necessary to the work of God. The Church was not his God. In a letter to Mr. Walker, he says: "Nor have we taken one step further than we were convinced was our bounden duty. It is from a full conviction of this that we have, 1. Preached abroad; 2. Prayed extempore; 3. Formed societies; and, 4. Permitted preachers who were not episcopally ordained. And were we pushed on this side, were there no alternative allowed, we should judge it our bounden duty rather *wholly to separate from the Church*, than to give up ANY ONE of these *points*. Therefore, if we can not stop a separation without stopping lay preachers, the case is clear—we can not stop it at all."

THE SACRAMENTS CONCEDED WITHOUT ORDINATION.

But the desire of the conference to avoid all appearance of separation from the Church led them to permit their preachers to administer the sacraments *without* the imposition of hands. This was not satisfactory to some, though they knew that the imposition of hands was a mere ceremony, which added

nothing to the validity of the ministry. But custom had invested it with so much importance; they were sure many people would never regard them as regular ministers of the Gospel unless they had been ordained in the usual way. Therefore, they wished the conference to avail itself of a venerable custom, which, while it would add nothing to their authority, nor subtract any thing from the authority of the Church, would give them an *influence* over some minds that could not be otherwise obtained.

These practical denials of Churchly assumptions did not, however, extinguish all leanings toward the establishment. The British Conference has never lacked good men of tender regard for the National Church. But the ridiculous conduct of some of the clergy has done enough to justify complete alienation, and, if we mistake not, the current of public sentiment is flowing in that direction.

Nor did the arrangement satisfy Mr. Kilham, and some others of his way of thinking. He was a positive character, born at Epworth, early converted, and sent out to the Channel Islands by Mr. Wesley as the servant of Brackenbury, some twelve years before, where he did much good. He was pious, active, and useful, but an indomitable democrat, and could not be pleased with the establishment. After a little time, therefore, he issued another pamphlet, entitled: "Progress of Liberty among the People called Methodists," which was very severe. At the next conference he was arraigned again, and failing to substantiate his charges, or to make any proper retraction, he was expelled, and soon after started the *Methodist New Connection*. Some of the

leading preachers had sympathized with his views; but his conduct alienated them, and thus, probably, contributed to the general harmony of the body. But Mr. Kilham was not to be suppressed so easily. This treatment only fired him with new zeal, and he went forth proclaiming his grievances in such chapels as were open to him, creating great disturbance in many of the societies. He also started a periodical at Leeds, called *The Monitor*, through which he denounced the leading men of the conference in unmeasured terms. The prospects for harmony were terribly alarming. The young preachers were represented as generally in sympathy with the new movement. But at the meeting of the conference in 1797, the cloud lifted. Ninety-seven of the suspected young men got up and signed a paper indorsing the abused leaders, and avowing their allegiance to the conference, while the fathers presented a revised copy of Mr. Wesley's "Large Minutes," incorporating the new arrangements, which, after free and full consideration, were signed by all the members of the conference except two, who left to follow Mr. Kilham. These proceedings gave to the societies a better organization than they had ever enjoyed, and met with general satisfaction. But they did not extinguish Mr. Kilham. He pushed on in his own peculiar style, and drew away, perhaps, some five thousand members. The success of his *New Connection* has not been great. We learn from their conference reports for 1874, that they number 240 traveling preachers, 1,270 local preachers, and 33,563 members. They have also 596 Sunday-schools, 11,566 teachers, and 80,483 scholars.

THE IRISH CONFERENCE ORGANIZED.

From the year 1752 to the year previous to his death, Mr. Wesley held an annual conference with the preachers in Ireland; and provided in his poll-deed for such gatherings as often as the British Conference should judge expedient. The Irish Conference has since been held annually under the presidency of some one appointed for the purpose. It embraces at present (1874) 152 itinerant preachers, 760 local preachers, and 20,740 members, no more than it has had for many years, nor half as many as it has sent forth into all lands ticketed to other branches of the Wesleyan family.

THE PROGRESS OF THE CAUSE.

How successfully Methodism passed its first transition period from the death of Wesley to its firm establishment on the new basis of the legal conference in 1797, may be inferred from the following summary of its reports, which show an annual average increase of 4,470 members:

Year.	Trav. Prea.	Members.	Inc.	Year.	Trav. Prea.	Members.	Inc.
1791	326	78,993	2,025	1795	391	97,902	6,155
1792	350	81,748	2,755	1796	390	104,879	6,977
1793	362	83,088	2,340	1797	399	108,261	3,382
1794	389	91,747	8,649				

Though there were seven years of much difference of opinion among both preachers and people, the grace of God seemed to abound, and the work of conversion did not cease. And what was of no little importance to the future of the societies, an asylum was established in the "New Connection,"

to which all coming dissentients might go in peace without disturbing the whole body. As it is impossible for men to see and feel exactly alike, even in religious matters, such a provision is necessary in all large communities.

With the smoke and dust of battle cleared away, and an improved and a generally accepted economy adopted, imposing large responsibility on the laity, the conference entered upon its work with new courage. A running sketch of its operations will be sufficient to show that it did not labor in vain.

The legal hundred was composed of "preachers and expounders of God's Holy Word under the care and direction of the conference," thus excluding laymen from membership. The conference, however, felt the necessity of lay co-operation, as Mr. Wesley had done, and proceeded to organize various committees for different purposes. In 1803, it provided for a mixed "*Committee of Privileges*" to protect the societies against outside interference with their operations. It had before authorized the stewards to attend the district meetings, showing a wise gravitation toward the complete improvement of all its available resources. Wise, we say, because God had called laymen into the work, who were little less distinguished than the ministers to whom we have referred; such as Joseph Butterworth, Thomas Thompson, a member of Parliament, and chairman of the "*Committee of Privileges*," Christopher Lundiers, and others. The celebrated class-leader, Carvosso, about this time left all secular business and gave himself wholly to spiritual work, going from place to place holding revival meetings. This was a

little "*irregular*," but was divinely suggested, and greatly honored of God in the conversion of many souls. Some churchly ministers, however, could not understand or enjoy it.

But they were still further tried by the activity and success of certain pious *women* who were moved to operate in the same direction. Ann Cutler went to Dewsbury, Bristol, Leeds Circuit, and elsewhere, and so labored that multitudes were born again. "This," says Bramwell, "was a great trial to many of us; to see the Lord make use of such simple means, and our usefulness comparatively but small." Mrs. Mary Fletcher and others were equally efficient, and helped to develop the slumbering power of the sisterhood, which has been increasingly appreciated ever since. Mrs. Fletcher went further than most of her sex,—she *preached*. Perhaps a more saintly woman never lived, nor one more beloved. She died December 9, 1814, in her seventy-sixth year, full of joyful expectations. Her expenses, the last year of her life, amounted to nineteen shillings and sixpence, less than five dollars; and never amounted, for her apparel, to more than five times that sum, while her contributions to the poor reached to nearly nine hundred dollars.

NEW TRIALS ENCOUNTERED.

In the outset, Methodism was regarded as a ripple upon the surface, hardly worthy of notice, that could easily be allayed by mobs, civil injustice, and popular prejudice. But it had now become so strong that serious apprehensions were entertained that it would undermine and overthrow the Established Church.

Its average annual increase had been about *seven thousand* members for many years, while the national Church was declining. Lord Sidmouth introduced a bill into Parliament that must have crippled its operation very seriously, as well as those of Dissenters generally. Wilberforce and other distinguished Churchmen strongly favored it. They could see nothing but danger in the 12,161 chapels, and the 3,672 ministers that had been licensed in the interest of Methodism. Indeed, they made it appear pretty clearly that the Methodists and Dissenters through the country were in the majority, and they knew of no way to save the Church, except to crush out the invaders. But the Methodists and Dissenters, now one in danger and interest, went to Parliament with such multitudinous petitions, backed by the influence of Erskine, Lord Stanhope, and others, that they defeated the measure.

But this did not bring peace or safety. Certain partisan judges took the liberty of giving a new construction to the "Act of Toleration," which would have been particularly fatal to Wesleyan ministers, both traveling and local. This brought the "Committee of Privileges" to the front again, who so remonstrated with the prime minister as to obtain a new act of Parliament, which defeated the wicked device, and secured important advantages by sweeping away the "Five-mile" and the "Conventicle" Acts, under which many of the abuses suffered by Wesley and his early coadjutors had been perpetrated. It brought relief, too, to the Quakers and other Dissenters, and was a grand achievement for Christian liberty.

About the year 1806, Dr. Coke, who had the sole charge of the missionary work under the conference, projected a domestic missionary plan, for the purpose of pushing operations beyond the outmost boundaries of the regular circuits. This being carried into effect, the missionaries were immediately assailed by every species of opposition, and the civil authorities would interpose no obstacles to these riotous proceedings. The missionaries suffered intensely from mobs, hunger, and the want of shelter, and some sacrificed even their lives on this fallow ground; but they conquered at last. Methodism in England has richly earned all the influence it enjoys. If the present ministry were willing to do and suffer half as much as did its pioneers, the millennium would not be long delayed.

THEIR FEELINGS AND TRIUMPHS.

The name of William Bramwell is familiar to many of my readers. In 1806, he wrote to his friend: "I was never so struck with the Word of God as at the present. Its truth, its depth, its promises quite swallow me up. My soul enters into Christ in this blessed book. I could read and weep and love and suffer; yea, what could I not suffer when I thus see him! Justification is great; to be cleansed is great: but what is justification or the being cleansed when compared with this being taken into himself! The world, the noise of self, all is gone, and the mind bears the full stamp of God's image. Here you talk and walk and live, doing all in him and to him. O, this heaven of God's presence; this opening into glory;

this weeping over a lost world; this being willing to lay down your life for the Church! God is love. I feel its fire, its burning, as I write."

This was the power of the fathers—they *felt* deeply. They had not half the average *knowledge* of the present race of preachers, but they were *on fire*. Like Jesus, they *WEPT*. Wesley wept. Whitefield poured out strong cries and *tears*. Bunting, Newton, Bradburn, Benson, Clarke, Asbury, all *wept* because they *felt*—were overwhelmed with concern for sinners. This was their power with God and men.

Under these heavenly influences they worked, preached, held family meetings, class-meetings, visited from house to house, suffered neglect, impertinence, and abuse. Entwisle wrote from the Rochester Circuit: "Having no horse, we have much walking in lonesome roads and wet fields.

As yet, we have no lodgings in our new places. One of them is five miles, another six, and another eight miles distant. From these places we return to supper. However, we have souls for our hire, and many poor people come two, three, and even four or five miles, from beyond where we preach, thirsting for the words of eternal life. Never have I seen so much fruit of my labors in the same time."

RADICAL MODIFICATIONS.

Wesley's "Deed" gave the legal hundred full control. Though other preachers had been present at the conferences, the legal conference elected its presidents and secretaries, and filled vacancies by seniority of service. But, the outsiders being greatly

increased, the conference in 1814 provided that all preachers who had traveled fourteen years might vote in the election of president and secretary, and also in the election of one-fourth of the members necessary to fill vacancies, subject to the confirmation of the legal conference. This showed a kind and brotherly spirit, and no doubt did much to produce good feeling in the connection. Under this arrangement Mr. Bunting was constituted a member of the legal hundred, though not old enough to come in on the ground of seniority.

THE PRIMITIVE METHODIST CHURCH.

It was now about time, in the ordinary course of events, to have another disturbance in the societies. The New Connection was becoming a little stale, and exciting novelties were crowding in on all sides. Among them was the appearance, in Staffordshire, of the eccentric Lorenzo Dow, from America, who at once attracted attention, and all the more by holding several camp-meetings, then and now common in this country. Some were delighted, believing that the measure was calculated to do much good among a class of people who could not be reached by other means. The conference of 1807, however, was not pleased with the innovation, and took strong ground against it; but Hugh Bourne, a layman, and one Mr. Clowes, a local preacher, were so impressed with its importance to the work of God that they stirred up the people and continued the meetings,¹ for which they were soon after expelled, and in 1810 organized the "PRIMITIVE METHODIST CHURCH," embracing the expelled members and such others as

sympathized with them. They did not secede, had no war with their old friends, did not leave them willingly, and have never had much controversy with them since. Though they have received such from the Wesleyans as desired admission to their ranks, they long since passed an act that any member of their conference being guilty of denouncing or criminating another branch of the Christian Church should by that act cease to be a member.

Thus, living at peace with all men, and adopting the most liberal and energetic measures, they have prospered exceedingly. They hold annual and quarterly meetings, maintain the itinerancy and other Methodist peculiarities, and are a pious and devout people. They have faith in God, faith in the power of his word and in prayer, faith in sudden conversions, and, like the Wesleys, they go among the lowest and meanest of men and win them to Christ. At their conference, in 1874, they reported 1,020 traveling preachers, 14,838 local preachers, 164,660 Church-members, and 306,333 Sabbath-school scholars. They have a few societies in the Canadas, which are also in a flourishing condition, but have not been able to do much in the States, because not needed. They are, sometimes called Ranters, in reference to the freedom of their devotions. Though the movement was deprecated by the conference in the outset, it has done a great deal of good, and is likely to do much more. Its increase in members in the last twenty years is 56,747, and its work is extending encouragingly in America, New Zealand, Australia, and elsewhere, and it is not unlikely that it has exerted a beneficial influence on the Wesleyan

connection by its piety and persistent labor for God and the salvation of men. Though it took away some members, the loss was soon made up, for in 1815 the conference reported 943 ministers and 230,948 members, and in 1825 1,083 ministers and 283,195 members, showing a very respectable increase.

CHAPTER X.

FURTHER MISSIONARY OPERATIONS—IN THE WEST INDIES—
THEIR EFFECT ON EMANCIPATION—MISSION TO INDIA—
OTHER MISSIONS—METHODISM IN IRELAND—MORE
TROUBLE ABOUT THE SACRAMENTS.

WHEN Methodists were in the heat of their early conflicts, their opposers tauntingly inquired, Why don't they go to Kingswood? one of the most heathenish places in England. It was believed that the godless miners would prove more than a match for their Gospel power. They were not long in accepting the challenge, and went, established a society and a school, and lifted that degraded people above the moral plane of those who thus impugned them.

With no stock in trade, no ministers, societies, funds, or schools, and few friends at the outset; and religion in the British Isles in the lowest spiritual condition, it was not reasonable to believe that they would soon find time or strength to reach out beyond the home field. Yet in 1760 we find them making a beginning in the West Indies, a little latter in Nova Scotia, and in 1766 in New York. These movements proved successful, as we shall soon see. Dr. Coke had charge of the missionary work until he started for India, in 1813. He did the planning, begging, and a large part of the *giving* from his personal resources.

The last conference attended by Mr. Wesley, however, in 1790, appointed a committee to co-operate with him, as a sort of Advisory Board. His first missionaries to the West Indies arrived there in 1786, several years before the London or any of the now great missionary societies were formed. Three years later, the Wesleyans commenced operations in France, followed by others in Africa in 1811, Asia in 1814, Australia in 1815, Polynesia in 1822, and thus on until they had dotted the four quarters of the world with their missions. In *fifty-seven* years, ending in 1859, they collected and disbursed \$17,349,160 in the interest of their foreign work, and won more souls to Christ than all the other British missionary organizations taken together.

OF THE WEST INDIES.

The progress of the cause in this interesting field is worthy of special attention in view of its *civil* as well as religious results to the inhabitants. Dr. Coke visited these islands in 1792, and found the work terribly embarrassed by persecution. Some of the missionaries had been driven off, some were in prison. The legislatures, in several cases, had prohibited further services under the heaviest penalties. But a considerable number had been converted. He did what he could to comfort the suffering but determined missionaries, and appealed to the home government for protection, and obtained it. One of his missionaries had refused nearly four thousand dollars per annum and ordination in the Church, preferring to work for the poor slaves. In 1798, the missionaries had increased to twenty-two, and extended

their labors to most of the islands, braving dangers and death. The climate and the persecutions they suffered were most fatal.

The ungodly planters seemed to feel that the preaching of such a Gospel to the slaves would sooner or later destroy slavery, and ruin their business, and they exerted all their great power to prevent it. They were right in this conviction. The only way to maintain slavery is to keep its victims down, a little above the level of beasts. The first real step toward heaven is a step toward liberty. Mere ceremonial religion, without God or humanity, is safe, and oppressors will accept no other.

But after all, they were obliged to acknowledge the transforming power of Methodism, for where they had been compelled to maintain a strong military force during the holidays to keep the slaves in subjection, they found the converted slaves could not only keep themselves in order, but their companions also. And, further, that it was safe to arm them to repel invaders. Thus the slaves proved themselves worthy of liberty long before they obtained it. The home government hearing that Methodist slaves had actually served as a military force, tendered Dr. Coke free passages for missionaries in the Falmouth packets, and exempted them from paying "the king's head money."

But O! what sufferings it cost the heroic missionaries to bring about this state of things! Buxton and Wilberforce, and their philanthropic associates, received all the glory of emancipation, but without these Christian missionaries, they had only

labored in vain. Theirs was a terrible struggle. They were stoned and starved and beaten and abused beyond measure. Societies were often broken up and scattered. Yet in 1799, Dr. Coke reported eleven thousand communicants, mostly slaves. In 1815 the conference reported about twenty thousand, though some of their chapels had been closed nearly ten years by governmental persecution. In 1807 Jamaica enacted a law forbidding any "Methodist missionaries to instruct slaves, or to receive them into their houses, chapels, or conventicles of any sort." Dr. Coke and the "Committee of Privileges" appealed to the home authorities, and had it nullified in 1815, when the chapels were again opened. Mr. Shipman, a missionary, writing of the reopening, says, "The people, with joy sparkling in their eyes, and feelings of gratitude visibly portrayed on their countenances, came up once more to the house of the Lord. But I am certain that few of our friends in England can have any conception of the joy this merciful and happy event diffused, because none have been prevented by law from worshiping God for eight or ten years." In 1814 these faithful missionaries pushed their way to Demarara and British Guiana, where the first class in South America had been formed three years before. But here, too, the fires of persecution raged furiously; but the right prevailed, as it did on the islands, in a most miraculous manner. For many years the slaves did not expect freedom, and first heard about it from their enraged masters. They embraced religion for its own sake, and its spiritual and eternal benefits, without even hoping for any change in their civil condition.

But while the missionaries were thus evangelizing them, and rendering them worthy of a better fate, the question of their emancipation was being pressed at home. Out of 352,404 signatures attached to a petition to Parliament, asking for emancipation, 229,426 were those of Methodists. May 14, 1833, the final blow was struck. Lord Stanley made a motion in Parliament that from August 1, 1834, slavery shall be forever abolished throughout the British colonies, and it was carried. All praise to God first, and subordinately to Great Britain, its philanthropic lords and nobles, Churchmen, and Dissenters, high and low! But in God's books the laborious, self-sacrificing missionaries stand foremost among the multitudes who contributed to the grand consummation.

THE SAFETY OF THE MEASURE.

One of the most alarming arguments against emancipation was, that it would produce rapine and murder, and drive the white population from the islands. This was now to be tested. Those who believed it, if any did, looked forward to the first of August with trembling anxiety. Time rolled on, and all was quiet. July came, and still the negroes continued at their task as usual. On the morning of July 31st, all was peace. The day's work being performed, the negroes assembled in their chapels, and kneeled in silent prayer; and while thus waiting upon God, the clock struck twelve, and launched eight hundred thousand slaves into freedom, when they arose and sung, "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow." Nine years after, at the Centenary of Methodism, eighty-three missionaries reported

42,928 members, proving the Gospel to be the power of God to save, and emancipation to be safe and profitable to all concerned. These missions now embrace 92 traveling ministers, and 44,014 members. (See statistics of Protestant Missionary Societies for 1872-3.)

The Nova Scotia Mission proved alike successful, and has been lately merged in the Methodist Church of Canada, a wise combination of several branches of the Methodist family, aggregating 1,004 traveling ministers, and 102,887 members.

Of the mission opened in New York, we need hardly speak here. Its proceedings and results will occupy the larger part of this volume. It is enough to say that the child has never dishonored her British mother, or become alienated in her affections, though she long since outstripped her in numbers.

MISSION TO INDIA.

Having successfully inaugurated these and other missions, Dr. Coke turned his attention to India, which had been upon his heart for several years. That pagan country had singularly fallen under the control of the British Government. Knowing the poverty of the Methodists, he at first thought of going out as a bishop of the established Church; but failing in this project, he struck for a Methodist mission. The Chief-justice of Ceylon had indicated a desire for this very thing, which naturally turned the thoughts of the doctor toward that point, and especially as the East India Company was opposed to having any thing of the sort within their corporate

territory. But the enterprise was not approved by many of his associates. They thought it was premature. They needed Dr. Coke at home to take care of the missions already established. He had always led in this department of effort, and it was difficult to see how his place could be filled. But having made all his arrangements to go, he appeared before the conference with them in 1813, in the sixty-seventh year of his age. "He had crossed the Atlantic eighteen times for missionary purposes, yet his godly ardor was unabated, and his conviction of the truth of Christianity and of its importance to mankind was increasingly strong and controlling. Some of the brethren, considering his advanced age, the difficulties connected with the undertaking, and the serious inconvenience the missions already in existence would experience in consequence of his departure, attempted to dissuade him from the enterprise, desirable as they confessed it to be. He heard their reasonings and remonstrances, and then, bursting into tears, he exclaimed, in a manner which they could not resist, 'If you will not let me go, you will break my heart.' This settled the question, and all opposition was withdrawn, and this honored patron and friend of missions, accompanied by seven others, embarked for the East, in December, 1813. On the third day of May following he was found dead in his cabin, having expired, it was believed, in a fit of apoplexy. Thus ended the life and labors of this estimable man, whose name will ever be remembered in honorable association with modern missions. Next to Mr. Wesley, no man was ever connected with the Methodist body who contributed more to extend the

blessings of Christianity among mankind." (Cent. of Methodism, p. 162.)

He was nearly forty years in the ministry, paying his own expenses, and giving all his considerable patrimony to the cause. He made some mistakes and failures, but more successes; suggested to Mr. Wesley his Deed of Declaration for the perpetuity of English Methodism; organized the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, established missions in the West Indies, Africa, and Asia, and did many other notable things that must hold his honored name in lasting remembrance.

A NEW ERA IN THE HISTORY OF MISSIONS.

This calamity, however, did not frustrate the enterprise. The body of Dr. Coke was committed to the deep; but his associates continued their voyage, and laid the foundation of the mission at Ceylon, and on the continent of India, which has since attracted much attention. And, strange as it may seem, the missionary spirit received a new impulse *at home*. The connection had been relying upon one man; but now that he was no more, all seemed to feel their responsibility, and rallied in support of the cause for which their venerated father and friend had given his fortune and his life.

And here we find the opening of a new era in the history of Wesleyan missions. The necessities of the cause suggested to Rev. George Morley, superintendent of the Leeds Circuit, the idea of a missionary society in that town, by means of a public meeting. Rev. Richard Watson and James Buckley were appointed to preach, and Thomas Thompson,

Esq., a member of Parliament, to preside. The meeting attracted general attention, and gave a powerful impulse to the cause. Similar meetings were now the order of the day, and followed each other in quick succession, "till the Methodist congregations, from the Land's End to the Tweed, caught the sacred flame."

In 1815 the conference appointed a board of lay managers, and made Jabez Bunting, James Taylor, and Richard Watson, secretaries. Under their efficient agency the Wesleyan Missionary Society was organized in 1818, and gave new life and power to the missionary cause. It soon after established its head-quarters in London, from which it has since dispensed its blessings to the heathen world. Revs. George T. Perks, M. A., and Luke H. Wiseman, are at present its general secretaries, while Rev. William Arthur, M. A., holds the position of honorary secretary in view of his long and faithful services. The Wesleyan Connection has also another society for *domestic* purposes, called "The Home Mission and Contingent Fund," under the secretarial supervision of Revs. Charles Prest and John Bond. This society raised in 1874 about \$122,000, while the other raised for foreign missions a little less than \$513,000, aggregating nearly \$640,000 to the missionary cause.

The missionaries to India, bereft of their honored leader, reached Ceylon in June, 1814, and were cordially received by the officers of the Government. Rev. Thomas H. Squann opened the service with the text, "We are come as far as to you, also, in preaching the Gospel of Christ." Lord Walsworth,

commander of the garrison, was deeply awakened, and the same evening, kneeling in prayer with the missionaries, found peace in believing. A native was also awakened by the same sermon, and became the first native Methodist preacher in Asia.

From this point the missionaries sallied forth, preaching through interpreters, and many were converted. Among them were several *priests*. Rev. Mr. Harvard, being invited into the temple of one who was awakened, preached before the idol, taking for his text, "We know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one." Thus the work proved an immediate success, and was strengthened by English and native missionaries, from whom, under God, Buddhism and other forms of idolatry received a powerful blow. In 1839, they reported twenty-one missionary stations, forty-three missionaries, and about twelve hundred members.

OTHER MISSIONS ESTABLISHED.

Missions were also established and sustained in Southern and Western Africa, with much labor and sacrifice. Mr. Shepstone, who had been an indefatigable missionary in Southern Africa for over forty years, has recently entered into his rest, leaving behind him traces of a noble life.

Oceanica, formerly of little account among the nations, is now a New World of itself, to which the tribes of Europe are going in considerable numbers. It was sunk in the lowest depths of degradation, and practiced about every crime known to heathenism. New South Wales was appropriated to the occupancy of criminals banished from England, who soon

formed the major part of the community. Among the few virtuous families that had found their way to the country, there were several Methodists, who formed the first class in Australia, March 6, 1812. This was soon expanded into three, two at Sidney, and the other at Windsor, one of which was led by an Irishman who had been converted through Methodist agency while waiting in prison for execution. His sentence being afterward commuted, he was transferred to this colony, with a Bible in his hands, the gift of his Methodist advisers at home. Being a man of intelligence, he began at once to let his new light shine among the people, and became the first Methodist preacher in that island country. Application was immediately made to the Missionary Committee of England, when Rev. Samuel Leigh was delegated to that field, and arrived at Port Jackson, August 10, 1815. This was the beginning of the work, which has lately developed into *four* annual conferences, namely: the Sidney, the Victoria and Tasmania, South Australia, and New Zealand, which meet in General Conference by delegates once in three years, and are all subject to its direction. The first meeting of this body thus constituted was arranged by previous action to be held in the city of Melbourne, May, 1875. They have three colleges—the Methodist College in Victoria, Newington College in Sidney, and the Prince Albert College in South Australia—formed after the models of this country, and give a first-class education for the highest positions. They have 348 traveling preachers, 1,438 local preachers, and 66,686 members, 922 Sunday-schools, and 59,185 scholars. They have also

arrangements for printing and other necessities, in imitation of the Wesleyan Connection.

How marvelous are the ways of Providence! When Mr. Leigh first went to New Zealand he found himself surrounded by a horde of hungry *cannibals*. In one village he saw twelve human bodies tattooed and arranged along the way. Another missionary found several chiefs roasting a slave between two logs. The work of the missionaries was resisted and overthrown several times, when they had to flee for their lives. So late as 1830, after ten years of labor and suffering, the mission seemed at some points almost a failure; but God came to their help, and it triumphed. Now, cannibalism is entirely done away, most of the inhabitants can read and write, the arts of civilization are generally adopted, the Lord's day is religiously observed, all of which has been effected by the revival of God's work in the conviction and conversion of souls. Even kings have bowed down and become class-leaders and preachers.

We know of no work in any age or country that shows the power of the Gospel to elevate society more clearly or forcibly than this. A proper presentation of its achievements will do more to overthrow infidelity than any fine-spun arguments that can be constructed. But we have not room for further detail here.

Methodism beginning its work in prisons, among the vilest of men, and conveying it to the lowest of civilized society, who were hardly as impressible as felons, condemned to death or banishment, and then pushing out among polygamists, cannibals, and idol-

aters, has demonstrated the salvability of all classes of men by the Gospel of Christ. After what has been accomplished by these experiments, no one needs hesitate a moment to undertake the Christianization of any people under heaven; nor should we be discouraged by any opposition, or temporary defeat.

The missions under the immediate control of the Wesleyan Missionary Committee and the British Conference in Europe, India, China, South and West Africa, and the West Indies, embrace 908 principal stations; 6,963 chapels and other preaching places; 1,213 ministers and assistant missionaries; 4,717 paid agents, catechists, interpreters, etc.; 25,043 unpaid teachers; 173,551 Church members; 16,518 probationers; 261,983 scholars; and four printing establishments. (Connectional Year-book for 1874, page 160.)

THE WORK AT HOME.

These efforts abroad seem not to have retarded the work at home, as many predicted. Considering the attitude of English Methodists, they have advanced with reasonable rapidity. Unlike Dissenters, they have been liberally denounced by all parties, by Churchmen for being Dissenters, and by Dissenters for their leanings toward the Church. But every weapon raised against them has failed. An attempt to overthrow Wesley's Deed, confirmed it forever. A vicious scheme to take away their licenses to preach gave them *more* license. Attacks upon their doctrines and leading men have not succeeded any better. Both survived the storm, and even shone the brighter for the shadow that was cast upon them.

They have increased and sustained all their various appliances nobly

In the progress of events they have been able to adopt measures for the full support of all their itinerant ministers, whether in effective service or superannuated; and years have elapsed since one had to fear the want of bread in entering their ministry. This has, no doubt, operated favorably on the cause. Men, good and true, have been secured to the work who might have spent their energies in a less useful way had the idea of becoming itinerants been identified with that of starvation or suffering the want of the necessities of life. To enter a ministry, even with a lucid conviction of a call to preach, in the certain prospect of poverty and dependence, and perhaps of great suffering therefrom, requires more grace than men generally enjoy.

Where there is *one* who will do it, we apprehend there are *many* who, though constrained by conscience to preach the Gospel, would impose some restrictions upon their preferences, and, as a matter of apparent necessity, enter the work in another branch of the Church, where their supplies would be more liberal and sure. We believe Methodism in America formerly lost many noble men, whose influence would greatly have accelerated the growth of the Church—men of piety and talent—merely by the paucity of the support she then afforded. She may have been saved, by this means, from the curse of a *hireling* ministry—a ministry that seeks the fleece and not the flock. But we apprehend the losses have greatly exceeded the gains.

By providing surely for their ministers, not only

while in effective service, but when disabled by sickness or old age, the Wesleyans have been enabled to *select* their men for the itinerant service. The supply of candidates is always abundant, though they seldom receive married men, unless their wives and children are provided for from other sources. They have also been enabled to hold them *rigidly* to the work when received, and make them feel that they *must* be *efficient* or retire. And, besides, the people, paying the full amount required, are allowed to be more rigid in their claims than would be modest if they had but half fed their preachers. The advantages are, indeed, numerous, and the Wesleyans have been reaping them for many years.

METHODISM IN IRELAND.

We have already referred to the introduction of Methodism into Ireland, and the establishment of the Irish Conference. Mr. Wesley took a lively interest in that people, and visited them personally forty-two times. Dr. Coke was also there often, and presided in their conference some eighteen years, and contributed largely in money and labor to their welfare. To human apprehension it was not a very inviting field, on account of its Popish proclivities. But Wesley considered the Gospel equal to the work it was designed to effect, and moved on Popery as he would on any other sin, "nothing doubting." Of course he was resisted, but God worked in his own way. At first all the preachers were English, and labored under a disadvantage in getting at the people. But it was not long before some of the natives were converted and commenced preaching. During the

rebellion, the preachers and their followers were objects of special hatred, not only for their religion, but their loyalty. They were imprisoned, tortured, and murdered, in a most shocking manner. The conference of 1798 wrote, "Never did we expect to see so awful a day as we now behold! The scenes of carnage and desolation which open to our view in every part of the land are truly affecting; we can not help crying, 'O God, shorten the day of our calamity, or no flesh can be saved!' To attempt a description of our deplorable state would be vain indeed. Suffice it to say, that loss of trade, breach of confidence, fear of assassination, towns burned, counties laid waste, houses for miles without an inhabitant, and the air tainted with the stench of thousands of carcasses, form some outline of the melancholy picture of our times."

Dr. Coke, taking advantage of their loyalty, did them good service with the civil authorities. Besides, the Lord called several *natives* into the ministry, who attracted much attention, and spread the new plan of salvation wherever they went. One Bartly Campbell, somehow, fell under conviction, and went to his priest, who put him upon a course of penances, to no effect. After much struggling he made a pilgrimage to Loughbery, which was regarded as a perfect cure for sin, but only grew more distressed. Calling upon the priest again, who had already absolved him, the following conversation occurred: "Did I not give you absolution?" "You did, father." "And do you deny the authority of the Church?" "By no means; but my soul is in misery. What shall I do?" "Do!" exclaimed his

holiness, "why, go to bed and sleep." "Sleep," replied the poor sufferer: "no, father; perhaps I may awake in hell." This so enraged the pious father that he was about to try the virtue of his horsewhip, when his penitent child hurried away and prostrated himself before God without the aid of saint or priest, and found Jesus precious to his soul. Happy in his first love, he went among the crawling pilgrims, suffering and bleeding around the purifying spot, and pointed them to the Lamb of God as the sinner's only hope. Though soon driven away, he told "the story of Jesus and his love" most effectually. Mr. Moore says of him, forty years after, that he "could not be satisfied with any meeting where none were convinced of sin, or enabled to rejoice in God," showing that he had the right idea of religious work. If all Christians felt like Campbell, dead meetings and useless service would not be so common as they are.

Gideon Ouseley was another native preacher, full of faith and power for more than *fifty* years. He forsook more for Christ than most men. He was honorably connected and well educated, and in good condition to meet the emergencies of the hour, and he had courage enough to take advantage of every opportunity to do good. One of his methods was to kneel among the crowd at mass and translate and apply the Latin prayers to the people, saying, "Listen to that." On one such occasion both priest and people were deeply affected, and as he mounted his horse to leave, the people inquired of their priest, "Father, who is that?" to which the priest replied, "I don't know; he is not a man at all—he is an angel; no man could do what he has done."

One writer, speaking of Charles Graham and Ouseley, who traveled much together, says: "The mighty power of God accompanied their word with such demonstrative evidence as I have never known, or, indeed, have heard of. I have been present in fairs and markets while these two blessed men of God, with burning zeal and apostolic ardor, pointed hundreds and thousands to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. And I have seen the aged and the young falling prostrate in the most public places of concourse, cut to the heart. I have known scores of these poor penitents stand up and witness a good confession; and, blessed be God! hundreds of them now adorn the Gospel of Christ Jesus."

These men would thus preach four or five times a day,—every-where, and to the worst classes of people. They were often insulted and mobbed; but knowing the Irish language, and possessing true Irish wit, they were seldom embarrassed. Then, having been trained papists, they understood how to meet the whims of Romanists; and preaching a part of the same sermons in English and another part in Irish, they commanded a crowd of hearers. William Hamilton was a different preacher, but admirably adapted to this kind of work. He said he never had sounder sleep than after preaching three or four times a day, sitting on his horse amid thousands of noisy papists, though it was sometimes on a bed with a dog behind him, and the sow and her litter underneath. But, he adds, "The conversion of many papists made up for all our troubles."

The success of this mission was wonderful, but it

was not for Ireland so much as for America and other countries. With all its prosperity, for many years it declined in numbers, owing to the immigration of tens of thousands of its members, chiefly to America, breaking up whole societies, and so reducing others that they were comparatively helpless. But the British Conference stood by them; and within a few years American Methodists have made some little return in funds for their continual contributions of men and means to this country. The Irish Conference at present embraces 152 traveling preachers, 760 local preachers, and 20,740 members. It is a permanent establishment, provided for by Wesley's Deed of Declaration. One-tenth of the legal hundred composing the British Conference are nominated by the Irish Conference, and its acts, when duly confirmed, are of equal force and validity to those of the British Conference. (Year-Book for 1874, p. 10.) It has two colleges—one in Belfast, and the other in Dublin—which afford respectable facilities for the education of the youth under its influence.

MORE TROUBLE ABOUT THE SACRAMENTS.

The agitation of this subject in England for seven years after Mr. Wesley's death, before mentioned, made but little impression upon the societies in Ireland, and it was hoped that they would entirely escape it. And they did for several years, particularly as they had been well served by one Adam Averell, a regular clergyman of the Church of England, who had early become a Methodist, and was twice elected president of the conference. He was a true Christian, but more *Churchish* than Wesley

himself. Hence, when the societies began to petition the conference in 1810, asking that they might have the sacraments from their own preachers, he was alarmed, and took strong ground against it. The conference, however, voted 62 in favor of the measure, to 24 against it; but did not carry it into effect for two years, when it adopted the English "Plan of Pacification," and allowed the sacraments to be administered in eight of the circuits, provided that two-thirds of the stewards and leaders should demand them, etc.; the vote to be taken without agitation. Mr. Averell and his sympathizers opposed the movement in open array, and carried the discussion into the societies, as if heaven itself was at stake. Many of the chapels were closed to the conference, which led to debates, lawsuits, and other evils that can be easily imagined, and finally to a new organization by Mr. Averell, on pretense of "replacing Methodism on its original basis in Ireland," called "*Primitive Methodists*;" adopting the discipline of the English Primitives, organized in Staffordshire, in 1810. Only one of the ministers of the conference besides himself left it; but many of the members did, and greatly weakened the body, and embarrassed it by imposing upon the societies heavy expenses. For four years following, the conference reported a decrease of members, reaching, in 1817, about 7,000. But, two years after, the tide turned again, and it reported an increase of three thousand. In 1819 the Primitives reported 12,000 members, most of whom they had taken from the societies. They have less now, though they have surrendered the point of original dispute, and allow their preachers, in full connection, to administer

the sacraments. But whatever their status, we are delighted to say that they are in process of reunion with their old associates. The matter has been under consideration by two large and able committees, one from each body, who report very favorably of the desired consummation. (*Irish Evangelist*, March 1, 1875.)

This schism furnishes another instance of reckless inconsistency in a sincere, good man. Averell had been breaking the rules of the Established Church ever since he turned Methodist. He had been ordained deacon *only*, and yet had been administering the sacraments for years, squarely against Church order. Besides, he knew Wesley and the British Conference had provided for the sacraments by their preachers in several instances, and had never objected to it so far as we know. But all at once he becomes horrified at the idea of other ministers doing the same thing, and must needs break down the connection in support of a mere ceremonial "*fable*," which he had practically discarded, and which he trampled under foot to the end of his life. It suggests also the folly of putting men into responsible positions before we have tried them. Mr. Averell was a relative of Dr. Averell, Lord Bishop of Limerick, and was taken into the conference without any probation, and put in the front rank. He was regarded as a great acquisition, but hurt Methodism vastly more than he helped it. Methodism has suffered enough from this kind of men and policy, both in the ministry and laity, to render it extremely careful. What have often seemed to be our greatest blessings, have turned out to be curses in disguise.

BRYANITES OR BIBLE CHRISTIANS.

This is the title of another new sect which resulted from a disturbance created by one William O'Bryan, a local preacher. Having been rebuked for various extravagances in reference to preaching and supporting the ministry, he withdrew from the connection, and organized a new society under the imposing title of "Bible Christian Connection." There is a striking resemblance between this body and the Primitives. It admits lay delegates to its conferences in equal proportion to its ministers, whereas the Primitives allow two to one. This connection reported, in 1874, 1,991 traveling and local preachers, and 26,878 members.

CHAPTER XI.

ORIGIN OF OUR STANDARD BOOKS—OTHER SECESSIONS—
CENTENARY OF METHODISM—NUMBERS AT THE DEATH
OF WESLEY—EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS—CONFERENCE
OFFICE AND BOOK-ROOM.

METHODISM has been very much indebted to its authors—to Wesley for many miscellaneous volumes, Fletcher for his incomparable “Checks,” Benson and Clarke for their commentaries and other works, and Watson for his “Institutes,” etc., all of which have contributed largely to the progress of the cause. Fletcher was occupied seven years with his “Checks,” and Clarke forty years with his commentaries, completing them in 1826, in the sixty-sixth year of his age and the forty-fourth of his ministry. Spending six years more in such literary labors as his age and infirmities permitted, they afforded him a comfortable support. Benson gave the products of his books to the connection. Great as was the influence of these wonderful men during their lives, they have accomplished more since by their books, being read and known of millions in both hemispheres.

ANOTHER SECESSION.

We have already referred to the establishment of theological institutions. The measure was not

adopted without creating some alarm for the purity and simplicity of Methodism. Dr. Samuel Warren was on the committee which made the arrangements; but, being nominated to no office, he arrayed himself against the whole enterprise and the Methodist polity generally, and formed a party to oppose both. His course was so violent and disorderly, the district meeting suspended him and put Dr. Newton in his place on the circuit, whereupon he appealed to the courts, lost his case, and elicited an opinion from Vice-Chancellor Shadwell which has been of great value to the connection. "It is my firm belief," he said, "that to that body [the Wesleyan Methodists] we are indebted for a large portion of the religious feeling which exists among the general body of the community, not only of this country, but throughout the great portion of the civilized world besides. When, also, I recollect that the society owes its origin and first formation to an individual so eminently distinguished as the late John Wesley, and when I remember that from time to time have arisen out of this body some of the most able and distinguished individuals that ever graced and ornamented any society whatever—I may name one for all, Dr. Adam Clarke—I must come to the conclusion that no persons who have any proper understanding of what religion is, and regard for it, can look upon the general body of the Wesleyan Methodists without the most affectionate interest and concern."

Warren, however, carried the case to the highest court in the realm, which, after thorough investigation, was decided against him. He, notwithstanding, appealed to the conference, which, after hearing

him in his own defense, pronounced him expelled. Gathering about him all the malcontents he could control, he formed a new Church, called the "Associate Methodists," or Warrenites, in 1834, which soon claimed to number 20,000 members. The doctor tried for a while to manage the discordant elements he had brought together, but, finding more difficulties than he had anticipated, took refuge in the Church of England, and served a small congregation in Manchester. The little band of his followers struggled on for several years without much success, and then combined with other factional parties and organized the "United Methodist Free Church," which at present claims 358 itinerant preachers and 66,909 members.

The loss to the connection was no doubt considerable, though it declined less than one thousand members the next year after the secession, and reported respectable gains for the years following; but these losses were partially, at least, compensated by some gain—the conference and people were more united than ever, and the legality of their economy was thoroughly established. Besides, the discussion revealing the most objectionable features of their prudential arrangements, it led to a wise modification of them in favor of the masses of the preachers and people, which added much strength and harmony to the body.

RELATIONS TO THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

We have already referred to the fraternal visit of Dr. Emory to the British Conference, in 1820. The war of 1776 suspended the pleasant intercourse

between the two branches of the one connection, and led to the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church as an independent body. The war of 1812 operated to keep the two connections further apart than was desirable; but the visit of Dr. Emory commenced a fraternal intercourse which has been maintained ever since.

CENTENARY OF METHODISM.

The centennial anniversary of Methodism occurred in 1839, and was a memorable event. It afforded a fit opportunity for reviewing all the way in which it had been led, and to strike out new and broader plans of usefulness. Including Canada, the upper part of which had lately been taken under its care, the conference embraced within its jurisdiction 1,635 traveling ministers and 420,198 members, having had an average annual increase of nearly ten thousand members for the last fourteen years. It was therefore in good condition for the anniversary.

The arrangements were made by a committee of the conference to hold meetings all through the connection, and, if possible, raise £80,000, or \$400,000, for different connectional objects, as a thank offering to God. But it soon appeared that these figures were too low, the whole amount being paid in cash, besides much more subscribed, before they had begun in many places. The enthusiasm was intense. The people contributed from real heartfelt gratitude in a surprising manner, until they had reached the round sum of ONE MILLION EIGHT HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS. This was appropriated 1. To the theological institutions; 2. For the centenary buildings in Lon-

don, and new missionary rooms and a mission ship; 3. To the relief of distressed chapels; 4. To the better support of worn-out preachers and preachers' widows; 5. For the building of a centenary chapel in Dublin; 6. To the Education Committee.

This financial endowment of so many interests could but inspire a right feeling for the spiritual and public part of the celebration, which occurred October 25, 1839. Methodists every-where felt the grateful impulse, and participated in the general joy. The Methodist Episcopal Church in this country, though it was not its centenary year exactly, raised *six hundred thousand dollars*, and joined in the jubilee. It was a grand demonstration, and made an impression on other denominations as to the power of Methodism that they had never felt before. Gathering up as it did, in sermons and addresses, the whole history of the Methodist movement from the beginning, with its direct and collateral influence on the social, political, and religious life of the Anglo-saxon race, it flung it broadcast over the world. It was thus seen "that most of the great religious and philanthropic institutions, which now chiefly embrace the moral power of Protestantism—the Bible Society, the Tract Society, the modern Missionary Society, the Sunday-school, as an agency of the Church—sprung directly or indirectly from the influence of the movement." Indeed, it was conceded by a Churchman that "Mr. Wesley started them all." He says, "The Church and the world were alike asleep; he sounded the trumpet and awoke the Church to work."

At the death of Wesley his followers numbered

about 500 preachers and 140,000 members. At the centenary, about fifty years after his death, they had increased to 5,200 traveling preachers, and 1,171,000 members. Since then, during the last thirty-six years, they have multiplied, all told, to 24,866 itinerant preachers, and 3,928,512 members, and have increased more in their appliances than in numbers.

OTHER IMPORTANT EVENTS.

The Centenary Anniversary having passed, the connection seemed to enjoy remarkable prosperity, under the influential lead of Dr. Bunting and a few other congenial spirits, whose piety and wisdom were generally acknowledged. But this order of things did not please certain aspirants, who thought themselves entitled to more consideration than was awarded to them. They were particularly hostile to the power of the conference and its leaders, and after much private conversation, they attacked both in certain "fly sheets" or tracts, in a most merciless manner. Messrs. Everett, Dunn, and Griffith, the leaders of the movement were arraigned and expelled. This created a deep sympathy for them, which they took advantage of to widen the breach, and, if possible, break down the connection. The result was, of course, another secession, and a new experiment in Church organization, which occurred about 1850. The connection lost by these means from sixty thousand to one hundred thousand members, and the new party brought upon themselves immense trouble and mortification, which seems not to have been compensated by any improvement in their own personal welfare or the work of God.

We have referred to these painful divisions for the purpose of erecting a beacon of warning to those who may come after. They speak, to all concerned, in a language that can not be misunderstood. The great and the strong should learn not to despise the weak and foolish, but to cherish them as a mother her children. If they pray, hear them patiently, and treat them kindly. Never stand for technicalities, where the peace of the Church and the welfare of souls is at stake. If they "compel you to go a mile, go with them twain," if you can do so with a good conscience. It is magnanimous to be conciliatory. If you can not comply with their wishes, respect them, however unreasonable. This may influence them to love you, though they may still think you in error.

The disaffected should also learn to be modest in their demands, and patient under defeat. The fact that they are in the minority is presumptive evidence that their views are erroneous. Their brethren are as likely to be wise and good as themselves. If they are not, which is possible, they are in no condition to be hurried, much less driven. Besides, measures carried in a bad spirit, and by artifice, will not prosper. Let them maintain their integrity, do their duty in meekness and faith, and leave the result with God. But never raise a storm to gratify self, and punish opponents. Especially, never be so deluded as to believe that they can effect much for religion by indulging in evil speaking or rancorous agitation.

EDUCATIONAL OPERATIONS.

Methodism, being cradled in a university, naturally invoked education to aid her enterprise. The

year of its organic birth, 1739, gave beginning to its first school (at Kingswood), for the training of poor children. This was modified and continued for various purposes until the year 1851, when it was superseded by the erection of fine buildings at Kingswood, near Bath, and designated the "New Kingswood school." It is under the direction of a committee of ministers and laymen annually appointed by the conference. This becoming insufficient in its former proportions, the Woodhouse Grove estate was purchased, and, being enlarged and adjusted to school purposes, was opened in 1812. These schools are about to be placed under one government and one head master. Private arrangements, too, were adopted some years ago for the education of ministers' daughters, which culminated in the opening of the "Five Elms," in 1869. The following year this school was transferred to the connection, and another house was rented, at Beecholme. Trinity Hall, at Southport, a private school for similar purposes, was presented to the connection in 1871, which has accommodated sixty pupils the last year. The whole number of ministers' children receiving instruction in these several establishments is 388—250 boys at New Kingswood and Woodhouse Grove, and 138 girls at the other three places named—while 306 boys and girls have received an educational allowance at home, making a total cost for the year of some \$90,750.

The "Wesleyan Educational Committee" dates back to 1838, and consists of twenty-four ministers and twenty-four laymen. Its prime object was to promote the establishment of week day schools for

children, and led to the erection of the Westminster Training College, for training teachers, at a cost of \$120,000, of which the Government paid \$37,500. After making two enlargements, the premises were devoted to male students, and other buildings were erected at Battersea, costing nearly \$80,000. The Westminster College has 131 male students, and that at Battersea, 103 females. Besides these schools the committee reported, March, 1874, 906 day-schools, giving instruction to 178,717 scholars.

THEOLOGICAL SCHOOLS.

At Mr. Wesley's first conference, held in 1744, the question was asked, "Can we have a seminary for laborers?" and was answered, "If God spares us till another conference." The same question was repeated the next year, and answered, "Not till God gives us a proper tutor." But no school for the purpose was established till some eighty years after—1834—when the committee of the conference secured the "Hoxton Academy," which had been used for a similar purpose by another denomination. These premises becoming insufficient, the Abney House, London, was rented in 1839, and three years later convenient premises were secured at Didsbury, near Manchester, to which the first branch of the institution was removed.

Another establishment of the sort was started at Richmond, in 1841, and opened September 5, 1843. In 1864 this was sold out to the missionary committee, and devoted exclusively to the education of missionaries. Needing further accommodations for the home work, a site was obtained at Headingly,

near Leeds, and, September 25, 1868, the Headingley Institution was opened, as a Seminary for Laborers, and has been very successful ever since. But in all these operations great care has been taken to avoid the introduction of *men-made* ministers. No one is allowed to enter these institutions until he has been acceptably employed as a local preacher, approved by the superintendent and quarterly-meeting of his circuit, examined and recommended by the district-meeting, and accepted by the conference. Then, instead of passing him directly to the active duties of the ministry, he may be placed under the training of one of these institutions, if deemed necessary.

Thus the last conference accepted ninety-four candidates, of whom twelve were appointed to circuits, twenty-five were sent to Richmond as missionary students, twenty-five to Headingley and Didsbury, and thirty-two were placed on the reserve list, subject to the call of the president.

The aim is not to bring every one up to the same educational status, but to give each that training which shall best adapt him to the work he is expected to do. And that they may not depend alone on literary acquisitions for their preparation, they are kept at work. Upward of eighty circuits were visited regularly by the students at Headingley last year, who held nearly three thousand services for preaching and prayer, besides out-door preaching, and visiting from house to house, thus giving the young men practice as well as theory. This arrangement seems entirely safe, and it can hardly fail to be very useful. Yet, in tracing the history of the conference during the eighty years in

which it had no "Seminary for laborers," we are surprised to find so many distinguished ministers, called of God, and thrust out without much previous preparation, such as Mather, Thompson, Pawson, Bradburn, Coke, Benson, Moore, Clarke, and a host of others of the same class; and, as if these were not sufficient, God immediately called more of equal capacity, as Townley, Treffrey, Watson, Newton, Bunting, Bramwell, Dawson, and many more, who gave a new impetus to the work, and made themselves immortal by their achievements. Such a body of able men was hardly ever known to exist in any Church at one time. Mr. Watson, speaking of Bradburn, after walking twenty miles to hear him preach, said: "I am not a very excitable subject, but Mr. Bradburn's preaching affected my whole frame; I felt the thrill to the extremity of my fingers, and my hair actually seemed to stand on end." Similar declarations were often made by others of his own preaching and addresses, to say nothing of his immortal "Institutes."

Mr. Bunting was the first elected member of the "Legal Conference," its president four times, and its secretary ten. But we have not room to record the grandeur of those wonderful men. Nor is it necessary: their praise is in all the Churches.

It is also a noticeable circumstance that God should have called so many such men from the *sources* he did. It looks much like his call of Moses, the first apostles, and Saul of Tarsus. Wesley's followers were generally poor, ignorant, and unknown to the leading influences of society. His preachers sprang from the lower walks of life right into the

ministry, and he recognized them at first much against his taste and ecclesiastical notions. Preaching was then a regular profession, requiring much preparation, ordination, etc. He naturally asked, therefore, "Can we have a seminary for laborers?" In the absence of this necessity he looked to the Established Church, and welcomed its clergy to his conference without a probation. But God looked elsewhere, and brought him the needed preachers, theologians, and commentators, upon whose voluminous writings the Christian world of to-day is largely dependent for its best views of religious truth.

Adam Clarke was a poor, dull boy, made bright by the grace of God. Bunting was the son of a servant-girl, poor and persecuted, who was wonderfully benefited by a sermon from Richard Boardman, while preaching on his way to Bristol to embark for America, on the words: "And Jabez was more honorable than his brethren," etc. (1 Chron. iv, 9, 10.)

About ten years after, she married William Bunting, and called her first-born Jabez, in grateful remembrance of Mr. Boardman's text. Samuel Bradburn, the "Demosthenes" of the connection for forty years, was born at sea, in the Bay of Biscay, and trained to the shoemaker's trade. Robert Newton, one of the most effective preachers and managers of any age, was born of poor agricultural parents on the sea-coast of Yorkshire, and born again in his father's house while kneeling in agony of spirit by the side of his penitent sister. He began to preach at once, when about fifteen years of age. Thus God chose "the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty." And the

days of these miracles are not past. He is calling mighty men now, like Moody and Sankey and Taylor, who must not be trammelled with any prudential arrangements, so called. No educational requisitions should interfere to blockade these providential supplies.

SEMI-CONNECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS.

To the institutions we have named may be added several others, strictly Methodistic, but not under the complete control of the British Conference. One of these is

THE WESLEY COLLEGE, at Sheffield. It was projected in 1836, and went into operation two years after, with grounds and buildings costing \$150,000, under the title of the *Wesleyan Proprietary Grammar-school*. In 1844, it became an affiliated college of the University of London. The deed requires that the governor and chaplain shall be a Wesleyan minister, to be nominated by the directors and confirmed by the conference annually. It furnishes a pretty thorough preparatory training for the learned professions, and sustains a good reputation. It received 191 pupils during its last session.

THE WESLEYAN COLLEGE, at Taunton, was established in 1843, for the purpose of securing a sound literary and commercial education, with suitable religious instruction, at a moderate expense. The president of the conference is by deed president of the college. It is supervised by a board of directors chosen by the proprietors and the superintendents of the Exeter District. Its resident governor and chaplain must be a minister of the conference in full

connection. Thomas Sibley, Esq., has been head master from its commencement. Since 1847, it has been connected by royal charter with the University of London, and students are prepared for the matriculation and degree examination of this university. The school is divided into three departments—the collegiate, the commercial, and the junior. The entire number of pupils during the last half-year was 220. It is a beautiful establishment, and is growing in favor and usefulness.

THE METHODIST COLLEGE, at Belfast, was founded for general Methodist educational purposes in Ireland. It is a fine establishment, occupying about six acres, near the Queen's College, and cost \$200,000. It has an endowment of \$100,000, with most of the desirable accompaniments of such an institution. It prepares students for the Wesleyan ministry, accommodates under-graduates and graduates of the Queen's University attending lectures, and furnishes education to the sons of Wesleyan ministers at a reduced rate. It also receives boys from the community generally, and prepares them for the universities, civil service, and mercantile life. Ladies and girls are also admitted. It can accommodate over one hundred boarders and three hundred day scholars, and its prospects are very encouraging.

THE WESLEYAN CONNECTIONAL SCHOOL was established at Stephen's Green, Dublin, under the auspices of the Irish Conference, in 1845, particularly with reference to the sons of Methodists. The premises are held by a mixed board of ministers and laymen, and are subject to the conference. It numbered 152 students at the close of the last year, which is all

that can now be accommodated; but arrangements are being executed for an additional building in the same square, costing \$50,000, half of which sum has been secured.

A HIGH-SCHOOL at Cambridge is a new project for high-class education to have a connection with the conference in a certain proper way. The plans are all laid to purchase the Leys estate for \$75,000. The first governing body, already elected, consists of eight ministers and eleven laymen. Cambridge, being one of the university towns of England, affords a very suitable location for such a school. The subscriptions to the enterprise promise well for its success.

The last, but not least, of Wesleyan educational establishments, is "THE CHILDREN'S HOME," designed to shelter and educate homeless children. It has been in operation five years, and has done a noble work. It is divided into several branches. The one at London has 140 children receiving instruction in letters and various departments of industry, such as -printing, carpentering, shoe-making, dress-making, etc. At Edgeworth, Lancashire, is another branch, where they have a fine property. Canadian friends have purchased another at Hamilton, at a cost of \$10,000, which comes under the general arrangement. Fifty children were sent thither in May, 1843, and forty boys have gone since. The Canadian government is so well pleased with the movement that it promises pecuniary aid. When the children are properly prepared, places are obtained for them. The report made to the "Education Committee of Review," July 24, 1874, says:

“During the eighteen months last past the income of the home has been \$71,835.”

Nothing certainly could be more in harmony with Wesley's whole spirit and life than this provision for poor children, and it furnishes a better guarantee for the future success of British Methodism than magnificent churches and splendid colleges, however desirable they may be. God has always shown special partiality for those nations and Churches which have cared for his poor. Though Methodism began in a college, it struck at once for the poor and degraded to lift them up, and this has been its strength. The moment it turns aside from this work its prosperity is at an end.

CONFERENCE OFFICE AND BOOK-ROOM.

Our outline of English Methodism will be radically defective if we omit special reference to its publishing establishment. This originated with Mr. Wesley, who published and sold his own and other books which he deemed important to his noble work; and he appropriated all the profits accruing therefrom to the poor preachers and the cause of God. At his death he left his book-establishment, with all belonging to it, in trust for the sole use and benefit of the conference. Since then, its profits have been annually appropriated to needy and aged ministers, the widows of ministers, and other benevolent objects. Its head-quarters are at No. 2 Castle Street, City Road, and 66 Paternoster Row, London. It publishes several periodicals, among which we find *The Arminian Magazine*, which was commenced by Mr. Wesley in 1777. It also issues a great vari-

ety of books to meet the demands of the connection. It is under the management, at the present, of Rev. F. J. Jobson, D. D., book-steward; Rev. B. Frankland, B. A., and Rev. B. Gregory, editors, subject to the conference, and intermediately to the book-committee, consisting of the officials and the superintendents of the London Circuits, who usually meet on the first Monday of each month. The *London Quarterly Review* is not published by them, though it is conducted by Methodists in the interest of the connection. The same is true of the *London Watchman*, and of the *Methodist Recorder*, and of a new paper just started, called *The Methodist*, which will represent all classes of English Methodists. This establishment is a powerful agency for God and the denomination, and is another evidence of the pious forecast of its remarkable founder.

ORGANISM OF BRITISH WESLEYAN CONNECTION.

This being the mother Church of Methodism, from which all other Arminian Methodisms have directly or indirectly sprung, we deem it appropriate to give an outline of its organism. The British Annual Conference is its highest court and only legislative body. It is composed of *one hundred* members, all of whom must be *preachers and expounders of God's Word*, under the care and direction of the conference, according to the "Deed of Declaration." The deed itself gave the names of the first hundred members, and provided for filling vacancies as they might occur by death, expulsion, resignation, superannuation, or otherwise. It can do business legally with *forty* members, and is required to continue its annual

sessions not less than five days, nor more than three weeks. Its first session was held in 1791, a few months after Mr. Wesley's death. There being some feeling among the two hundred and twenty-six preachers not embraced in the "legal hundred," the conference very wisely resolved that *all* the preachers in full connection should enjoy equal privileges with themselves, so far as the deed would permit. Prior to 1814, vacancies were filled by seniority of service, thus avoiding all competition; but the arrangement kept out some of the ablest men of the conference. The non-legal members are allowed to participate in the election of the president and secretary, and also to elect members to fill one-fourth of the occurring vacancies. This brought Dr. Bunting into the conference, who was the first *elected* member. Lately they have permitted them to fill every alternate vacancy, which is legal, provided the chartered hundred shall indorse their selection. Similar courtesy has also been extended to the Irish Conference, whereby it nominates *one-tenth* of the candidates to fill vacancies; and its action in other respects, when duly confirmed, is of equal authority with that of the British Conference. And this is all in beautiful conformity with Mr. Wesley's dying entreaty; namely, "I beseech you by the mercies of God that you never avail yourselves of the 'Deed of Declaration' to assume any authority over your brethren; but let all things go on among those itinerants who choose to remain together, exactly in the same manner as when I was with you, so far as circumstances will permit."

Here, then, is the high court of jurisdiction among

our British brethren, having charge of every interest connected with them, whether spiritual, temporal, or ecclesiastical, directing and controlling 3,500 traveling ministers, 27,327 local preachers, 628,460 members, and incidental matters involving tremendous responsibilities. But while the legal conference is the real center of power, it does very little of the work, this being distributed among subordinate agencies, from the president down to the youngest and poorest of its local classes.

OF DISTRICT MEETINGS.

These were instituted at the first meeting of the conference after Mr. Wesley's death, and embrace all the itinerant preachers on the district, whether in full connection or on trial, and they are required to attend the annual meetings, unless unavoidably prevented. These meetings rank second to the conference in authority. During the transaction of financial business the stewards of the several circuits, the district treasurers of the Children's Fund and the Worn-out Ministers' Fund, the foreign missionary district treasurer, the lay members of the district chapel sub-committee, and the lay treasurers of the Connectional Funds, are members of the meeting.

Minor District Meetings are composed of the chairman of the district and four ministers, who form a court for the settlement of differences that may arise among the preachers, and to try *appeals* from accused members of the society, and from superintendents, against the action or non-action of leaders' meetings. In all these cases the parties have the right of appeal to the annual district meeting.

Mixed District Meetings originated in disputes about the sacraments in 1794, and take cognizance of immoral conduct and heresies on the part of preachers, and consist of all the preachers of the district, and the trustees, stewards, and leaders of the circuit concerned. This meeting can only determine the guilt or innocence of the party suspected. If found guilty, however, he is removed from the circuit. The district meeting alone can finally determine the case.

The Special District Meeting consists of all the ministers of the district, and, if desirable, four preachers from other districts, to be selected by the parties especially interested. The president of the conference *may* preside if invited. This body convenes only on very special occasions. An appeal to the annual conference from its decisions is admissible.

The Annual District Meeting, held in May, is purely administrative, embracing the examination of the preachers, the condition of the societies, candidates for the ministry, who, if approved, are recommended to the approaching conference. The collections for the year are reported also, applications for permission to build chapels or schools considered and determined, and the preachers designated who may attend the conference.

The Financial District Meeting looks after the temporal affairs of the district.

The Circuit Quarterly Meeting is the chief local court, consisting of the ministers, stewards, leaders, local preachers, and trustees of the circuit, and has disciplinary powers, as well as the control of all the moneys raised for the support of the ministers of the

circuit, and is required to furnish the necessary supplies. This is the grand board of finance, and has the sole right of petitioning the conference as to the appointment of ministers.

Besides these meetings, they have leaders', local preachers', and trustees' meetings, involving certain responsibilities, indicated by their respective titles. But we find no bishops connected with any of these arrangements. Though Mr. Wesley ordained two superintendents which the conference might have recognized and employed, they preferred to elect their president annually, and have done so from the beginning. And they have not perished for the want of an episcopal head; nor have they suffered for ordination. Till 1836 they ordained without the imposition of hands, and then, with the aid of our own delegate, Dr. Fisk, they adopted it for mere form's sake, not deeming it at all necessary. And they did it themselves, without the aid of a bishop, claiming, as we do, the indefeasible right of elders to ordain, and preferring this course to employing a bishop. Which is the better way is a question about which good men may honestly differ. Whether bishops or presidents, they have no authority above any elder except that which is given them by their electors. Mr. Wesley, aiming to secure an efficient administration, required that members of the legal conference should drop out on becoming superannuated, and effective ones be put in their place, and the conference prefers to make a fresh choice for president every year.

Nor do we find in this arrangement any mention of presiding elders. These are superseded in part by *chairmen* of districts, who are still pastors. They

attend the annual district meeting, and some subordinate meetings, as occasion may require. The *superintendent* of the circuit performs another part of our presiding elder's duty, in holding the quarterly-meetings in his circuit. The more delicate and responsible part of his work is provided for in another way, to be considered in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XII.

THE APPOINTMENT OF THE PREACHERS—HOW DONE—
NEGOTIATIONS SOUGHT—OF THE BENEVOLENCES OF
THE WESLEYANS—CONCLUDING REMARKS.

THE more difficult work, referred to in the close of the last chapter, is that of appointing the preachers. Mr. Wesley did this, while he lived, at his own discretion, committing himself, however, to certain trustees not to keep one man in the same place more than two years in succession, except in case of revival, where longer continuance should be especially necessary. This was as far as he could go without seeming to array himself against Divine Providence. But his Deed of Declaration allowed of three years' continuance, though it did not define the manner of making the appointments. The legal conference, however, at first restricted the term to two years, except as before stated. It also provided for a "Stationing Committee," to prepare the appointments. This was no accident, if it was a blunder, but a settled preference for the Presbyterian System. Mr. Wesley ordained Dr. Coke a superintendent or bishop in 1769, and Alexander Mather in 1787; and they were both present and fully empowered to perform Episcopal functions, but were virtually discarded, though great and good men. Special effort

was afterward made to inaugurate the Episcopal form of government, but it was a failure.

The stationing committee was to be composed of one minister from each district, to be elected by the ministers of the district; and they were required to meet at the place where the conference should sit three days in the week preceding the session, in order to prepare the appointments. That plan has been maintained to the present time with variations. The stationing committee now consists of the president and secretary of the conference; the ex-president and four ministers appointed by the conference, together with one representative minister from each of the thirty-four districts, elected by the joint vote of the clerical and lay members of the district committee. How two thousand ministers can be satisfactorily stationed and changed from time to time seems to many quite unaccountable. Even Methodists, who have been accustomed to bishops and presiding elders, can hardly see how so delicate a work can be done without them. But our English brethren seem to move on very smoothly and give general satisfaction. And they do it, too, without requiring the abandonment of all Church and ministerial intermeddling, which is thought by some to be necessary with us. Indeed, they seek to have all parties in interest participate in making the appointments, not only by sharing in electing the stationing committee, but by negotiating and settling the appointments, so far as possible, before that committee shall meet.

The conference at its last session ordained as follows:

“Each representative of a district” (on the sta-

tioning committee) "is directed to send to the secretary of the conference, not latter than the 5th of July, in each year, upon a schedule to be provided by him, complete lists of the arrangements provisionally made for the stationing of the ministers in his district, the invitations accepted by ministers in his district to circuits in other districts, all ministers in his district for whom no arrangement has been made; from these lists the secretary shall compile and cause to be printed in a convenient form, for use in the stationing committee, one complete list of all arrangements thus provisionally made, and a separate list of all ministers for whom provisional arrangements have not been made, and a copy of these lists shall be sent to each member of the stationing committee at least seven days before the meeting of that committee." (Connectional Record and Year-book for 1874, pp. 122, 123.)

Thus negotiations and even contracts between the preachers and people are sought and encouraged by the conference. And they are generally sanctioned, though they may be canceled for good reasons. Here the Wesleyans stand exactly on a par with other denominations. Presbyterian ministers and people may make a contract, but to be valid the presbytery must approve it, otherwise it is null and void. The same is true of the Episcopalians, no contract will stand unless it be approved by the bishop of the diocese. And even among Congregationalists, who claim the largest kind of freedom, no contract of the sort is of any force unless it have the indorsement of a council. So that, really, the only obstacle in the way of a Wesleyan preacher securing

a circuit to his taste lies in finding one that has good sense enough to give him a call. If he fails in this, the presumption is that he is not much in demand, or that he is looking too high.

Whether this method secures a wiser distribution of ministerial talent is not for us to determine. We hardly need to say that we have generally preferred our own plan for us. And there can be little room to doubt that with reasonable modifications it is much better adapted to most of our work than the English plan. But this is of no account; our general policy is no doubt established, and will be maintained.

It should be said, however, in passing, that the difficulty in making the appointments in England is not so great as here. They have the "Children's Fund" to equalize the cost of supporting large families, while here we have nothing of the sort. There, the only question is, Is he the man for the place? Here, we have to ask, What is the size of his family? How many children has he? There, a rich society having a childless pastor, supports just as many children as it would if its parsonage was crowded with them. Then there are other differences which our limits forbid us to state.

BENEVOLENCE OF THE WESLEYANS.

One of the marked features of original Methodism was its benevolence. It began by the sacrifice of every personal comfort for the relief and elevation of others. It required of its followers industry to get all they could honestly, economy to save all, and liberality to give all—great principles which its honored founder inculcated and practiced to the last, dying

worth less than ten pounds, though he had acquired and disbursed many thousands.

The first movements of Methodism involved expenses in seeking protection against mobs, in constructing chapels for public worship, in releasing local preachers from small debts which prevented their entering the ministry, and in meeting the expenses of preachers. Hence, in 1849, it was suggested that yearly collections should be taken to meet these and kindred expenses, which were denominated

THE CONTINGENT FUND.

In 1856, its field of operations was extended, and its name changed to the "Home Mission and Contingent Fund." Since then it has pushed the home missionary work among the poor and neglected with considerable energy and success, having secured 64 parsonages and 144 chapels, accommodating 60,115 persons. Its collections last year were nearly \$126,000. The affairs of this fund are managed by a committee of ministers and laymen annually appointed by the conference, and its advantages are various and wide-spread, reaching all classes of contingent necessities, such as special losses, sickness of ministers, etc., not provided for by other arrangements.

THE CHAPEL FUND

originated in the double necessity of aiding poor societies in the erection of chapels, and restraining them from going into imprudent and hazardous enterprises. After suffering much embarrassment and mortification from bad investments and worse debts, the conference, in 1775, enacted that no chapel

should be built unless first proposed to the conference. In 1790, chapel-building committees were appointed for both England and Ireland; but this did not remedy the evil. In 1817, the building committee was reconstructed, but without the desirable effect. The next year the Chapel Fund was established, and placed in the hands of a committee composed of fifteen ministers and fifteen laymen, with full power to receive all collections and appropriate them. In 1854, the arrangement was again revised, and every thing relating to chapels was placed in the hands of a large committee to be appointed annually by the conference, and to consist of an equal number of laymen and ministers, and Rev. William Kelk was set apart to act as its secretary and look after the business. This brought relief and prosperity. In 1866, further modifications were made, placing the business in the hands of thirty ministers and thirty laymen, the latter being nominated by the "Committee of Review of Chapel Affairs," connected with whom are *two* clerical secretaries, who supervise every interest involved. The result, in part, may be inferred from the facts that within the last twenty years, while the income of the fund has amounted to only about \$560,000, the money actually contributed toward the removal of debts and the cost of new erections has reached the magnificent sum of \$19,576,000, including \$5,592,830 of old debts paid. The report to the conference in 1874 shows receipts for the last year amounting to \$44,855, debts reduced \$119,130, and sanction given to the erection of 129 chapels at an estimated cost of \$1,074,775, and 21 schools at a cost of \$57,995.

Though we long followed our English brethren afar off in this respect, we can but admire their perseverance. Feeling the embarrassments that originally moved them, some of our conferences took initiatory action on the subject many years ago, which culminated, in 1864, in the organization of our "Church Extension Society," whose proceedings will be noticed in their proper place.

THE PREACHERS' AUXILIARY FUND.

This was established in some sort to aid poor and sick preachers and the widows and children of preachers, in 1763, and each preacher was expected to contribute *ten* shillings yearly to its treasury. After passing through various changes in name and policy, though its objects remain the same, it is now entitled the "Worn-out Ministers' and Ministers' Widows' Fund," and is rendered successful by reason of the services of a secretary, who devotes his whole time to its interests. So popular a cause as this even requires special advocacy to command any thing like the support it deserves. Its collections the last year amounted to some \$66,000.

They have also a ministers' "Sustentation Society," providing for its members when superannuated or supernumerary, and their wives in widowhood. It had a grant from the book-room last year—£3,000 (nearly \$15,000)—and reported assets of about \$1,211,000. Its annuitants number 288 preachers and 378 widows. This, however, is not strictly a benevolent institution so much as a protective arrangement for those who are willing to pay for its benefits.

THE CHILDREN'S FUND.

This was instituted in the year 1819, to relieve an embarrassment which had been long realized. Till then the several circuits had to pay a certain allowance for each of their preachers' children. Hence, men with large families were often objected to purely on financial grounds, and were embarrassed themselves at the thought of being burdensome to a kind but poor people; and not unfrequently these evils were rather aggravated by the fact that a rich neighboring circuit was enjoying the services of preachers who had less children, perhaps none at all.

To remedy these difficulties and equalize the expense of supporting the children of the preachers among the circuits, the district meetings entered into an arrangement to require each circuit to pay its proportion of the allowance to all the children in the conference, according to the numbers in society and their financial ability. This measure met with general favor, both among the preachers and the people. The operation of it is this: The rich circuits, having less children among them to support than is their equitable proportion, pay the claims of their preachers for such as they have, and pay over the balance to the treasurer of the "Children's Fund," while the poor circuits, having more preachers' children to support than properly belong to them, draw upon the "Children's Fund" for the amount of their claims.

Thus all the preachers' children are provided for; and, that there may be no failure in the operation of the plan, each circuit is required to pay its annual apportionment to the fund before it can receive any

assistance, whatever its necessities. The amount collected for this fund last year was \$97,595.

The liberality of the Wesleyans becomes still more impressive when we look at their *educational* enterprises, to which we have already referred; but the climax of their benevolence is seen in connection with their

MISSIONARY OPERATIONS.

These are managed by a large and strong committee of ministers and laymen, selected from all the districts, and supervised by two ministerial secretaries, who give their time exclusively to the work. We refer now to foreign missions, embracing Europe, India, China, South and West Africa, and the West Indies, tabulated as follows:

Central Stations, called Circuits,	908
Chapels and other preaching-places,	6,963
Ministers and Assistant Missionaries,	881
Other paid Agents, as Catechists, Teachers, etc.,	3,506
Unpaid Agents, as Sunday-school Teachers, etc.,	25,013
Full and accredited Church members,	173,551
On Trial for Church membership,	16,518
Scholars,	261,983
Printing Establishments,	4

The home receipts for this work during the last year, reported at the annual meeting held May 4, 1874, were \$610,460; foreign receipts from affiliated conferences, \$229,510, making a total of \$839,970.

Add to this imperfect inventory other benevolences that might be named, and remember that all this is done after supporting the Established Church (a burden, thank God, from which we are exempt), and giving freely to maintain their home institutions, the liberality of the Wesleyan brethren

can hardly fail to command our admiration. If American Methodists can bring themselves to "abound" equally in this grace, according to their better circumstances, no interests among us will suffer for the want of funds. The example is worthy of imitation, and to find it in the family from which we sprung, and to which we cleave with a filial fraternity, is the next best thing to possessing it ourselves.

Having compassed the ground covered by our plan, a few remarks in relation to the various measures referred to in the foregoing pages will close this part of our book.

The first is, that all these arrangements, particularly the funds, have been providentially demanded. Nothing has been devised before its time, and nothing really matured for many years after its first discussion. This circumstance ought to encourage the younger members of the Wesleyan family to "try again," and never to cease discussing important practical questions till they shall have hit upon the right plan, and see it in successful operation.

Another thought, which might not occur to the reader from what has been said, is, that these several plans and measures, though providentially suggested, were the result of *profound study*, not merely during the sessions of the conference. The conference seemed generally to be impressed that the necessary brevity of their sessions, and other circumstances, would not admit of the needful investigation. Therefore, when they found themselves approaching the crisis, when something must be done, they appointed large committees, embracing the wisdom of the ministry and the laity, and designated the time and

place of their meeting. In these committees the matter was deliberately dissected limb by limb, every weakness and impracticability detected, and the whole consolidated and adapted to the Wesleyan system, so that, if approved by the conference, it might become a part of that system, and seem indispensable to its healthful operation. But another advantage of this course was, the plan, when it came out, was as much the *people's* as the preachers', and was, in a great degree, to be managed by them. This gave it popularity, and secured its success.

To the reader of this sketch, these regulations may seem complicated. This is their first appearance to a stranger. But if one will examine them more closely, he will find them complicated, indeed, yet *simple*; and taken together, the most finished and effective scheme of raising money extant. How else could such an interest be kept up, and such vast amounts of money be raised in a society embracing few of the wealthy, and composed chiefly of the poorer classes, many of whom are objects of charity themselves, and all of whom are exorbitantly taxed to support the extravagance of the Episcopal Church—taxed for every thing, not only for what they eat and drink and wear, but for the very light of heaven that shines upon them, and often oppressed in their wages, too, and compelled to work long and hard for what will scarcely procure them the coarsest fare? Should their children imitate the parent in this respect, Methodism would soon fill the whole earth.

which formed an essential part of the government for many years. And it was about as intolerant as the old government from which they fled. Three years later, Portsmouth and Dover, now leading towns in New Hampshire, were settled by parties holding the principles of the Plymouth Colony.

In 1634, Mr. Calvert settled a colony in Maryland, on the St. Mary's River, making religion free, though he was a Catholic. This was the first example of the kind on the continent. Next came Rhode Island, settled by Roger Williams, who, with five others, fled from the Massachusetts colony into the wilderness, to avoid religious persecution, and making a stand, he called the place Providence, because he "desired it might be for shelter for persons distressed in conscience." This was in 1636, and was the beginning of the settlement of Rhode Island.

Connecticut was first settled in 1660, by emigrants from Massachusetts, taking the religion of the Pilgrims with them, which they long retained, though with less intolerance than was manifested by their fathers. Hudson entered the river now bearing his name, in 1609. Six years later the Dutch effected a settlement on Manhattan Island, now New York, and soon after, another at Albany. Trade and money-making were the leading motives of the enterprise; but still the colonists brought the Protestant Calvinistic institutions of Holland with them, and legislated in their interest. Subsequently, however, England gained the ascendancy, when the Church of England took precedence of all other religions, and held it till the war of the Revolution.

In 1631, the State of Delaware was settled by

the Hollanders, with the same religious principles which prevailed in New York. New Jersey assumed colonial existence in 1664, and was made up of a mixture of English, Dutch, and Swedes, allowing religious liberty to all parties. North Carolina made a feeble start in 1660, by people from New England and Virginia; and South Carolina in 1670, granting religious liberty to the colonists. Pennsylvania was first chiefly settled by Quakers from West Jersey. In 1682 William Penn landed at the point now known as Philadelphia and commenced his honorable negotiations with the Indians under the branches of a towering elm. His right to the soil was secured by a double purchase, first from his king, and then from the natives, and was properly named Pennsylvania (Penn's Woods), and Philadelphia, or *brotherly love*, was a fit designation for its chief city, in view of his humane conduct to all concerned.

The colony of Georgia was established, as we have seen, by General Oglethorpe, and was composed principally of members of the Church of England. This occurred in 1733, and three years after John and Charles Wesley came out by invitation to look particularly after the religious interests of the Cherokee Indians, but meeting with unexpected difficulties, soon returned to England to bless the New World in a way which they did not then understand.

We have given these facts that our young readers may see of what a heterogeneous mass of conflicting tongues and peoples this nation was originally composed. Religiously, Calvinism and Ecclesiasticism were the two predominant elements, and the natural opponents of Methodism. But it was for-

tunate that these colonies started by different nations, had all come under the British Government, and were working into the use of the English language.

PREPARATION FOR THE WORK.

There is another aspect of the subject worthy of consideration; namely, the providential preparation of men for the work to be done. The Wesleys were favorably born and educated like thousands of others; were led to read certain books, and hear and see certain things in common with their associates, but were religiously impressed by them, and moved to seek after God in a manner and to an extent that others were not. By this means they struck a new current, little talked of and less understood, and were borne along into joyous fellowship with God, and into complete sympathy with his desire for the elevation, holiness, and happiness of mankind. Under this impulse they began to seek and to save the lost, giving special attention, in imitation of their Divine Master, to the most needy and neglected. They had no purpose but to perform their present duty,—please God and “do good to men.”

Soon after, something very similar occurred in Ireland. Thomas Williams, having become imbued with their spirit, was moved, not sent by man, to cross the channel and tell the people of Dublin what God had done for his soul. Many believed and demonstrated the truth of his doctrine by actual experiment. Mr. Wesley, hearing of these wonderful results, first visited that city in the Summer of 1747, and following the demands of the cause, he afterward spent about six full years in that country,

crossing the channel many times; but still without any plan of establishing a new Church, or any expectation of benefiting the rest of mankind by his labors there. Yet God raised up the men on that very spot who actually carried the Gospel to the four quarters of the globe; besides multitudes of others who became the most prominent in the home work: such as Henry Moore, Adam Clarke, and a host of others. As we have seen, that simple sowing produced the class-leader and preacher in the person of a banished convict who first introduced the Gospel to Australia. Methodism found him in prison, condemned to death; had him converted, his punishment commuted, and put a Bible in his hand as he left the English shores to return no more.

ORIGIN OF METHODISM IN AMERICA.

We have now to record another singular result of those early labors. In the Summer of 1760, a group of Irish emigrants landed in New York, among whom were a number of Methodists, one a local preacher by the name of Philip Embury. They seem to have been more connected by the ties of blood and ambition to improve their temporal interests than by religious sympathies or purposes. Embury was about thirty years old, honest, industrious, well informed, but timid, and a carpenter by trade. Though he had been converted, had seen Mr. Wesley, and exercised a few years as a class-leader and local preacher among his friends and neighbors at home, he was hardly the man to raise the Methodist standard among strangers and amid the spiritual darkness and death that reigned in New

York at that time. The population of the city was then only about twenty thousand, and every little divergence from the established routine attracted attention. For one reason or another the new-comers did not let their light shine, and relapsed into the spirit and customs of the world, making no considerable show of religion for some six years. In the mean time, others arrived, some of whom made no pretensions to piety, and contributed, no doubt, to extinguish what little devotion remained. But Barbara Heck, a real mother in Israel, who deprecated this state of things, finding several of her friends engaged in card-playing, went in among them, threw the cards into the fire, and exhorted them to return to God. And, addressing Mr. Embury then, or soon after, she said: "And *you* must preach to us, or we shall all go to hell together, and God will require our blood at your hands!" When he objected that he had no house or congregation, she replied, in the true spirit of Christian enterprise: "Preach in your own house first and to our company." The duty was too obvious, and the appeal too earnest and pungent to be resisted, and he yielded to importunity and preached his first sermon in America "in his own hired house" on Barrack Street, now Park Place, to a congregation of five persons, whom he at once formed into the first American class. From this time he continued to preach till his house became too small, when an empty room was secured near the Barracks, in "the most infamous street in the city." Then, as is usual in such cases, and with such religion, God worked. Three musicians from the Barracks came in and were converted, and began

to exhort. The keeper of the almshouse was also interested, and several of its inmates joined the little band. Something new occurred every month to cheer the praying few in a strange land. In the Spring of 1767 they were surprised to see a military officer in their meeting. What could he want there? was a question that naturally occupied all minds. But they were soon relieved by his singing and kneeling like themselves. It was Captain Thomas Webb of the Royal Army, Barrack-master at Albany, a staunch Methodist, and a local preacher from England—just the man for the place and the times—a shining light, of whom it was said by Asbury, he is “an Israelite indeed;” by Wesley, “he is a man of fire;” by John Adams, of Revolutionary fame, “he is one of the most eloquent men I ever heard;” and by others, “a perfect Whitefield in declamation”—“he was truly a Boanerges, and often made the stout-hearted tremble.”

He, of course, was invited to preach; and did so, in military costume, laying his sword on the table before him. This was a novelty that could but attract a crowd too large for the place. They, therefore, went to a rigging-loft on William Street, sixty feet by eighteen, which would not accommodate half the people who came three times a week to hear these strange preachers, one a carpenter, and the other a soldier. This suggested a meeting-house, which the good Barbara Heck had been praying for ever since she brought Embury to his duty, and had “received with inexpressible sweetness and power the answer, ‘I, the Lord, will do it.’” A simple plan was prepared, the trustees appointed,

Mr. Embury being the first, as he had been the first preacher and class-leader. A site was leased on John Street in 1768, and purchased two years after; and the people generally encouraged the enterprise, from the mayor down to the poorest citizen. The subscription paper, which is still preserved, contains the names of two hundred and fifty persons. Captain Webb stands first in amount, one hundred and fifty dollars. The building was a chapel, not a church, sixty feet long by forty-two wide, and had "a fire-place and chimney" to avoid the law and not offend the English Church. Embury superintended the work, and made the pulpit (still in possession of the Church) with his own hands, and October 30, 1768, dedicated the first Methodist chapel in America to God, before it was finished, trusting in Providence to furnish the means to meet the bills. The house was made of stone, faced with plaster, and furnished, at first, with seats without backs, and a gallery without breast-work or stairs, which was reached by a ladder. Nevertheless, it was thronged from its opening, though called "The Wesley Chapel," and the first in the world that took the name of the founder of Methodism, and thousands gathered around it who could not gain admittance. It was without vestry or class-room. Mr. Embury continued to supply the pulpit and look after every-thing. In 1770, a parsonage was erected near the chapel, and rudely furnished with articles donated or lent, and became the resting-place of the missionaries, Pil-mour, Boardman, and others. In the mean time, 1769, the faithful Embury left the city and went to Camden, New York, with some of his associates, and

formed the first Methodist society within the bounds of the Troy Conference, at Ashgrove. That conference now numbers 264 preachers and 34,608 members, and preserves the remains of the honored founder of American Methodism in the cemetery at Cambridge, to which they were lately removed, after slumbering in solitude on the farm of a friend and in the little grave-yard at Ashgrove for fifty-seven years.

Thus God led the simple carpenter in a way he knew not, and made him the honored instrument of starting a society which has grown to be the largest Church on the continent. Old John Street has been the birthplace of thousands, and still remains, a monument of the origin of Methodism in this country, speaking to the few who still love its gates, though almost concealed by the mammoth warehouses of commerce which surround it.

FURTHER PARTICULARS OF CAPTAIN WEBB.

Captain Webb had been a brave soldier for his country, and bore the marks of battle on his person. Having lost the sight of one eye, he wore a shade over it; but his whole appearance indicated a kind heart and a holy purpose. He was generous, as well as pious, usually preached without remuneration, and, besides giving the largest subscription to John Street chapel, loaned the trustees fifteen hundred dollars, without interest, and begged for them one hundred and sixty dollars in Philadelphia. Being placed on the retired list, with the pay of a captain, in view of his heroic service, he gave himself up to the itinerant work, and went abroad preaching and

forming societies wherever he could. Twenty-four were converted under his preaching at Jamaica, and became the first fruits of Methodism on Long Island. He traveled through New Jersey, and formed a class at Burlington, making Joseph Toy its leader, who afterward became a teacher and preacher. He formed the first class in Philadelphia in 1768, while preaching in a sail-loft, and afterward participated in procuring the first, the St. George's Methodist Church, in that city, which was established in 1770. In the mean time, he traversed Delaware and Maryland, visiting Wilmington, Baltimore, and other places, sowing the seed which has yielded so abundantly since. Visiting England, he reported what the Lord was doing in this far-off land, plead for missionaries, and returned with Shadford and Rankin in 1773. Continuing his labors here until the breaking out of the war of the Revolution, he returned to England, and continued faithful and efficient until honorably discharged in a good old age.

Thus we see the Providence of God again. Em-bury, converted in Ireland, came to this country as a carpenter; and Webb, converted at Bristol, England, under Mr. Wesley's ministry in 1765, came out as a soldier, and together they laid the foundations of a spiritual superstructure in this New World that was to outstrip its European model, and send its influence to the ends of the earth. Where the Wesleys and Whitefield had failed of making any organic stand, or erecting any lasting spiritual memorial of their labors, these simple men planted a vine which has run out over the surrounding walls, and sent its life-giving fruit to millions of perishing sinners.

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS.

About this time, probably in 1764, Robert Strawbridge, another Irish Methodist local preacher, arrived in this country with his young wife, and settled in Frederick County, Maryland. He had little care for the world, hardly enough to get a living, but was intensely religious. He commenced preaching at once in his own house, and formed a class, and soon built a log chapel at Sam's Creek, twenty-two feet square, but without a floor, door, or windows. Still the society flourished, and sent out several preachers, who did good service. He traveled about, preaching in many places, formed the first Methodist society in Baltimore County, was the means of Richard Owen's conversion, who was the first *native* Methodist preacher in the country, and did much good, preaching without "fee or reward, and, during the last two years of his life, he gave his whole time to the work." Strawbridge led out other preachers also, and achieved grand results; but when the first missionaries appeared and put the work under circuit arrangements, making him subordinate, and especially restraining him from administering the sacraments as he had done, his Irish spirit rebelled, and he seemed to settle down about home, preaching to two little societies. He did not enjoy Asbury's domination, and Asbury did not highly esteem him. He was finally given the free use of a farm near Baltimore, by a gentleman who knew his poverty, and died in the Lord in 1781. It is impossible for some high-minded, independent, devout men, to enjoy the military discipline of the Methodist itinerancy. They feel hu-

miliated to be dancing attendance upon men inferior to themselves, and to be subject to their conceit or whims, as they sometimes are. The Church has lost men of this class, who might have been saved, perhaps, by a little more brotherly consideration on the part of the rulers. Strawbridge was admired by Owen, who preached his funeral sermon and many others; but Asbury could not brook his insubordination.

Thus, it appears that Methodism commenced its career in this country in two places about the same time—one in the City of New York, and the other in the woods of Maryland—and by two Irishmen, uneducated local preachers. Which spoke first, it is hardly possible to determine, though the argument seems to be in favor of Embury. And as this has been the general understanding for so long a time, it would seem almost a pity to have it disturbed. But whether the sisters may not justly claim that Barbara Heck takes precedence of both these honored worthies, admits of little doubt. So far as we now see, Embury would have remained in his unhappy obscurity if she had not spurred him up to duty. And we doubt some whether John Street Chapel would have become a fact when it did without her heroism. However, to God be all the glory, whose they were, and whom they served. (Bangs's *His.*, Vol. I, pp. 52-58.)

OTHER IRREGULAR HELPERS.

In 1769, Robert Williams arrived in New York with a friend by the name of Aslton, who, knowing his poverty, paid his passage. Williams was

evidently a very zealous Christian. Hearing of the work in New York, he was at once on fire to come over, went to Mr. Wesley to get license to preach, persuaded Ashton to come with him, and taking his saddle-bags on his arm, walked to the ship with a loaf of bread and a bottle of milk to sustain him. He commenced his work in the John Street Chapel, where, two years later, he was stationed. From there he traveled south, laboring with Strawbridge and others, and did a good work. Jesse Lee was one of his converts in Virginia. He is said to have been "the first Methodist minister in America that published a book, the first that married, the first that located, and the first that died." Saving sinners was his aim in every place, and by all means. He preached, visited, published and sold books, and died. Though his grave is unknown, his memory is precious.

John King was another providential interloper from London, who arrived in 1769, and opened his mission without license in the Potter's Field of Philadelphia, the little society there being afraid of him. But he felt that he must preach, and he did so, and demonstrated his call of God, and at last obtained a license, united with the first missionaries sent out by Wesley, and was a member of the first conference in 1773. He preached in the open air in Baltimore, traversed New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina, and achieved much good.

Thus Methodism was unofficially planted and well started on this continent, without the direct order or even knowledge of Mr. Wesley, by one woman and a few local preachers, regular and irregular, who

were drawn to the New World by other than missionary motives, showing that God led the movement here as in Europe, but still by Wesleyan agencies.

These supplies, however, created new necessities, and Mr. Wesley, the acknowledged leader of Methodism, was urged by various parties, lay and clerical, to send out men whose whole time could be devoted to the work. Delighted with such strange intelligence from New York, he laid the matter before his conference, August 3, 1769, and called for volunteers. Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor, after several hours' delay, and a touching sermon by Wesley, responded, and were sent. A collection was taken on the spot to pay their expenses to the amount of one hundred dollars, and two hundred and fifty dollars or more toward the debt on the John-street Chapel, a noble one, considering the extreme poverty of the preachers, and that their connectional debts amounted to nearly thirty thousand dollars, and nothing in the treasury. Mr. Boardman was a man of God throughout, and it was said of him at his funeral thirteen years after, "with eloquence divine he preached the Word," and "devils trembled when for Christ he fought."

Pilmoor was also a young man of good parts, converted under Wesley's preaching at the age of sixteen, and educated at Kingswood school. A rough passage of nine weeks brought them to Philadelphia, happy in God, when they met Captain Webb and found a society of about one hundred members. Pilmoor opened his mission from the steps of the State-house, and from thence he went to the

race course, where he preached to four or five thousand people. Boardman also preached and started for New York, giving the soldiers at Trenton a moving sermon in the Presbyterian Church. Ten days after, he wrote to Mr. Wesley that he had about seventeen hundred hearers at the chapel, one-third of whom were inside and the others around the house. "The number of blacks that attend the preachings," he said "affects me much." Thus early, Methodism took an interest in this abused race. He preached some four times a week, and received his board, and fifteen dollars per quarter to meet other expenses.

But he did not confine himself to New York. He alternated with Pilmoor, spending about half the time in Philadelphia, pushing out in all directions, as far south as Baltimore, and as far east as Providence and Boston.

The letters of these two first missionaries show that they *lived in God*, and rejoiced in the self-sacrificing work they had undertaken. The terrible gales they encountered on their nine weeks' voyage, when they were expecting to perish in the great deep, did not shake their confidence; they were ready to die. And now, in the same blessed hope, they preached and worked, weeping over the multitudes that thronged their path. The city contained the ablest English and Dutch ministers of the age, and yet their more pious parishioners would run after these half educated young men, in spite of the remonstrances of their pastors. Nobody drew such crowds, except Whitefield, who was on the ocean with them for the last time, in another vessel, coming to his burial. They, like him, were filled with

the spirit that led Jesus to die for the race, and sought to save sinners to the uttermost in season and out of season. This was the secret of their power, and is to-day an indispensable endowment for the highest success in the work of God. Whitefield preached and hurried off, leaving others to gather the fruit of his labors; they preached and organized their followers into classes and societies, with which a mighty host have since become associated.

OTHER MISSIONARIES SENT.

The American field opening up so promisingly, Mr. Wesley was induced to send forth other laborers. Asking the question, in his conference, in 1771, Who are willing to go to America? five responded, but only two could be spared; Francis Asbury and Richard Wright were accepted and sent, both of whom landed in Philadelphia, October 17, 1771. Asbury was twenty-six years old, the only living child of his parents. At the age of thirteen he was put to a trade, which exhausted six years. In the mean time he was awakened, sought the Methodists, was pleased with them, obtained religion, and began to hold meetings at seventeen. Five years later he entered the itinerant work. Of course he had but little opportunity for education; but he was industrious, loved to read, and stored up most useful knowledge. In a word, he was just the man to take charge of the American work. Bidding adieu to his friends, he went to Bristol to embark, without money or outfit. But he says, "The Lord soon opened the hearts of friends, who supplied me with clothes and ten pounds." He had two blankets and slept on the bare floor during

the voyage, but made no complaint. "I feel my spirit bound," he said, "to the New World, and my heart is united with the people, though unknown;" "I am going to live to God and to teach others so to do."

Less is known of Mr. Wright. He spent most of three years in Maryland and Virginia, and returned to England, where, after about the same length of time, his name ceased to appear in the minutes.

These good men commenced their labors in Philadelphia, in what is known as the Old St. George's Church, originally built for a German reformed society, but bought for the Methodists in 1770, through the influence of Captain Webb. It was not finished then nor long afterward. One author says, "In process of time it was floored from end to end, and more comely seats were put into it, with a new pulpit like a tub on a post." It was the largest Methodist Church in the country for about fifty years, and was a favorite place with Asbury. It is the honored mother of many children, who are proud of their pedigree. Two weeks after their arrival, Asbury wrote, "I find my mind drawn heavenward. The Lord hath helped me by his power, and my soul is in paradise." "Glory be to him that liveth and abideth forever."

Asbury soon turned his steps toward New York, preaching at Burlington on his way, where Webb had been a little before, and giving Staten Island its first sight of a true Wesleyan itinerant. That casual beginning has developed into nine Churches and 1,635 members, as may be seen by the last minutes.

Reaching New York, November 12th, he received a warm welcome by Boardman and others, and plunged into the work anew, expressing profound interest in the colored people.

But he was too military in his construction to be long satisfied with the random operations that prevailed among the preachers, and addressed himself to systematizing the itinerant work, so as to reach out into unoccupied fields. "I am fixed to the Methodist plan," he said (that is, the plan of itinerancy), and, being Wesley's "assistant," he had this under his special charge; but it was a pretty difficult point to maintain, as there was already a disposition in some of the little societies to be like the nations around them, and have settled pastors, which most of the preachers seemed to favor. But he was fully determined to sweep the country, and at once formed a circuit, stretching from Staten Island to East Chester, for the Winter's campaign, and led the way himself, preaching in the open air, private houses, and anywhere he could find an opening. The next Spring (1772), Boardman, the superintendent, removed him to Philadelphia, from which he sallied forth, saying, "I hope that before long about seven preachers of us will spread over seven or eight hundred miles." Six months after, he received marching orders for New York, and was off again, preaching in prisons, in the woods, and at executions, while Williams went to Virginia and Pilmoor to Savannah. He set his compeers on fire by his heroism, and indicated to the people and to Wesley that he was God's anointed to lead the little Methodist band to their coming struggles and triumphs. Accordingly,

toward the close of 1772, Mr. Wesley wrote him a letter, appointing him superintendent in the place of Mr. Boardman, whom he soon met at Princeton, N. J. They agreed in judgment, he says, about the affairs of the society, and "were comforted together." From that point he pushed on to Maryland, and found that "swearers, liars, cock-fighters, card-players, horse-racers, drunkards, etc., had become new men, and were filled with the praises of God."

Coming to Baltimore, he found the work was gaining ground through the labors of his predecessors, and the people were waking up to open their doors for preaching and the entertainment of the itinerants, where they at first left them to preach out of doors and live at the hotels. An Irishman, Captain Patten, was the first to open his house, and he was soon followed by others, and they were all filled with interested hearers, when another sail-loft was obtained, and overflowed with people coming many miles to hear the strange itinerants who preached without a manuscript, prayed without a book, and were happy in God. Asbury took it upon himself to organize them into *classes*, and to introduce the Wesleyan rule, to project a meeting-house, which soon led to a second, the first being the dwelling of the courageous Irishman above named.

From this singular beginning, Methodism became a settled institution in Baltimore, and now numbers about 11,500 members.

Having arranged matters here, Asbury organized a circuit of two hundred miles in extent, with twenty-four appointments, which he compassed every

three weeks. March 29, 1773, he wrote: "I rode twenty miles to Susquehanna, and just got there, almost spent, time enough to preach at three o'clock. Hitherto the Lord hath helped me. Praised forever be his dear and blessed name! Tuesday, 30th, our quarterly-meeting began. After I had preached, we proceeded to business, and in our little conference the following queries were propounded, namely: 1. Are there any disorderly persons in our classes? It is thought not. 2. Does not dram-drinking too much prevail among our people? 3. Do none contract debts without due care to pay them? 5. Is there nothing immoral in any of our preachers? 6. What preachers travel now, and where are they stationed? It was then urged that none must break our rules, under the penalty of being excluded from our connection. All was settled in a most amicable manner."

This was a great accession, and brought multitudes together, involving powerful sermons, many conversions, and much joy, and was the beginning of greater things of the same kind, connected with "old-fashioned quarterly-meetings," so much talked about even now.

Asbury, hearing of some disturbances in the North, took his departure, and returned to New York to be temporarily relieved of his superintendency, probably at his own suggestion, by Thomas Rankin, already on his way to the country.

CHAPTER II.

THOMAS RANKIN AND GEORGE SHADFORD—PROGRESS OF THE
CAUSE—REMARKABLE AWAKENINGS—MORE TROUBLE
ABOUT THE SACRAMENTS—ORIGIN OF THE GERMAN METH-
ODISTS OR UNITED BRETHREN.

IT had been hoped for some time that Mr. Wesley himself would come to the country and give direction to the Methodist work. Captain Webb visited England in 1772 to urge him to this course, and also to send out more missionaries. Wesley gave him a warm reception, and used him, while there, to excellent purpose. He seemed really proud of his military preacher, and was disposed to comply with his wishes, but deemed it inexpedient for him to leave the European work so long as a trip to America would require. He, however, sent two of his choicest men, namely, Thomas Rankin and George Shadford, who arrived at Philadelphia in the Summer of 1773, with Captain Webb and Joseph Yearbry, a local preacher, who at once entered the itinerant ranks. But in doing this he had to resist his brother Charles, as usual, who thought the captain fanatical, and did not accept his glowing account of the prospects in the New World.

Rankin was a Scotchman, an intelligent, zealous preacher, who was ready to lay down his life to bring sinners to God, and a thorough disciplinarian.

The story of his early life and labors is very interesting. Shadford was also an admirable man; was in the army several years, but on his return home went into business with his father, when he was led to Christ by a most interesting train of circumstances. His conversion was of that kind which moved him at once to save others. Establishing family prayers in his father's house by permission, he soon brought both of his parents to rejoice in the Lord, with two others of his family, and several of his companions. He talked to all he could reach, and many bowed under his influence. He was a successful soul-saver before he was a preacher. Wesley was pleased with him, called him into the itinerant work, and sent him with his colaborer, Rankin, to conquer this wilderness for God.

Mr. Rankin being the senior of Asbury by some years, was made superintendent of the American work in his place. *Seniority* was a potential element in those days, and was often followed to the detriment of the cause. Mr. Wesley supposed that he knew his men in this case, and believed that they would do their best, however arranged. But it is by no means certain that he did not make a mistake. Rankin was too stern and authoritative for the country and the times. Though tender-hearted in preaching to sinners, he was evidently too commanding in government among his brethren, and for this reason often gave offense. He did not understand human nature or the American temper so well as Asbury; but the Revolution soon removed him to the home work, for which he was evidently much better adapted.

THE FIRST CONFERENCE.

Up to this period no regular conference had been held, and little conventional business done. The preachers were scattered about in different States, and were appropriating their labors as circumstances seemed to require. But now, Mr. Rankin having received authority from Mr. Wesley, summoned a conference of the preachers in Philadelphia, to commence on the fourth of July. Here it was agreed that Mr. Wesley ought to exercise the same authority over the preachers and societies in this country he did in England, and that the doctrine and discipline contained in the *minutes* should be the rule of their action. It was further agreed that the preachers should not administer the ordinances, and the people should be encouraged to receive them in the Episcopal Church. This was a pretty hard requisition, as many of those ministers were sporting characters, without the least sympathy for *vital* religion. It is hardly surprising that Strawbridge's Irish heart repudiated them. The wonder is that the requisition should have been made here or elsewhere; but Mr. Wesley had not then entirely escaped from the bondage of ecclesiasticism. If it was wise, it is difficult to see it at this distance of time.

Robert Williams, as we have seen, was a great man for books, printing and circulating them among the people, particularly some of Mr. Wesley's excellent sermons. The conference disapproved of his course, and required him to sell out and quit, except as he might have the authority of Mr. Wesley, and the consent of his brethren. This placed private

publishing under embargo, and contributed, no doubt, to promote the connectional establishment, called "The Methodist Book Concern."

The societies at this time embraced *ten* itinerant preachers, and 1,160 members. The appointments of the preachers were as follows:

<i>New York</i> —Thomas Rankin.	} To change in four months.
<i>Philadelphia</i> —George Shadford.	
<i>New Jersey</i> —John King, William Waters.	
<i>Baltimore</i> —Francis Asbury, Robert Strawbridge, Abraham Whitworth, and Joseph Yearbry.	
<i>Norfolk</i> —Richard Wright.	
<i>Petersburg</i> —Robert Williams.	

Observe, these were all the appointments made at the first conference, held in 1773, one hundred and two years ago. Now the annual appointments of the several Methodist Churches in this country number 19,156 preachers, filling several hundred closely printed octavo pages, and supervising 3,031,988 members, showing an average annual increase of more than 186 ministers, and 29,522 members.

William Waters was the first native American who joined the itinerancy. He was born in Maryland of Episcopal parents, led to God by the Methodists, and entered the ministry at the age of twenty-two years. One of Wesley's sermons, printed by Williams in a disorderly way, as would seem from the action of the conference, led him to see the possibility of entire sanctification, and to seek and enjoy its fullness.

The action of the conference was also a blow at Strawbridge and others, who insisted on administering the sacraments, or were in any way inclined to independency. However, they bore it patiently, and peace

was preserved. Messrs. Boardman and Pilmoor, seeing the war-cloud gathering, were inclined to return to England, and the conference allowed them to do so. The former did good service for eight years, in the itinerant work there, and then died in peace; and the latter returned to Philadelphia in a few years, and became the rector of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, where he received the title of Doctor of Divinity. He was evidently afflicted by being entirely left out of sight by Mr. Wesley, in providing for Methodism in the two countries. He was, however, a good man, and retained much of his early love for Methodism during his long and useful life, and contributed annually to the poor preachers' fund.

The members reported at the first conference were distributed as follows: New York, 180; Philadelphia, 180; New Jersey, 200; Maryland, 500; and Virginia, 100, showing a preponderance in favor of Maryland, the field of Strawbridge, who had administered the sacraments as well as the Gospel.

THE PROGRESS OF THE CAUSE.

With these arrangements the work advanced with new energy. The conference of 1774 showed a gain of *seven* preachers and 913 members, and the next year there was an increase of 1,075 members. This was a remarkable year for revivals. Both ministers and people were strangely baptized with the Spirit, showing a gain at the conference in 1776 of 25 preachers and 1,873 members. But the signs of the times were ominous of a coming struggle, and Boardman, Webb, Wright, and others, loving their king and country, returned home. To meet the emer-

gency the Lord called others to the work, who were, after all, better adapted to it, as they were less wedded to the English Church, and cared more for the salvation of souls than they did for ecclesiastical order. Among these were Philip Gatch, Richard Owen, Slater Stephenson, and Nathan Perigan, all the fruits of Strawbridge's ministry. They were mighty men in their way, and for the work they were called to do. They had the advantage of being thoroughly awakened to feel themselves to be sinners, guilty and lost, and then, of being clearly and powerfully converted, and made inexpressibly happy in God. Under this inspiration they began almost necessarily to speak of it, and persuade others to repent. Venturing out on this line, they found they had "power with God and with men," and prevailed. Others noticed it, too, and encouraged them forward; and, without any settled intention, they found themselves successfully preaching the Gospel. Had they entered the ministry as a choice of professions, without any clear apprehension of themselves as sinners, or as pardoned and transformed by the grace of God, as we fear that some do, they would have been an incumbrance, though they might have delivered pretty lectures, and been esteemed for their intelligence and gentlemanly deportment. This was not the kind of ministers needed at that day, or even now. The work of God must suffer in their hands.

Abraham Whitworth, sent to Baltimore from the first conference, was an Englishman and did good service in connection with Webb, Shadford, and others in New Jersey, but afterward fell into intemperance, and probably perished in the British army. His elo-

quence could not save him. Asbury thought that he became "puffed up" with pride. But in the days of his usefulness he was the means of converting one of the strongest characters that ever appeared in the itinerant ranks; namely, Benjamin Abbott. Abbott was a thorough sinner of the roughest mold, a regular fighter, who feared not God or regarded man, and about forty years old when he was made a new creature. He was now as valiant for God as he had been for Satan, and commenced his labors in his own family. His wife and six children were soon rejoicing with him in the Lord. Exhorting his old companions in sin, many believed and were also saved. Though he was bold as a lion, he was, nevertheless, tender as a child, and went forth fifteen miles around his farm preaching and weeping and dreaming and triumphing gloriously. When he first heard about sanctification, he was ready for it, and resolved to seek it, and in receiving it "fell flat to the floor," and "had not power to lift a hand or foot, nor yet to speak a word." When he arose and went out, it appeared to him that "the whole creation was praising God." This gave him new power, and going to preach at a place called "Hell Neck," on account of the wickedness of the people, he wrote, "One sinner there said he had heard Abbott swear, and had seen him fight, and now would go and hear him preach. The word reached his heart, and he soon after became a convert to the Lord." A wicked man whipped his converted son fifteen years old, when Abbott went out to remonstrate with him, and brought him to tears and to prayer. Though he was several times mobbed, he generally

won the field. Yet he knew little except the simple plan of salvation, which he every-where presented.

But he was always ready for every kind of objection and phase of difficulty. Says Dr. Stevens, "No evangelist of that day was more successful than Benjamin Abbott.

He was mighty as a preacher, and he preached with the expectation of immediate and individual results. The distinct, demonstrative reformation and salvation of individual souls were the only satisfactory proofs to him of the success of his ministry, and he sought for such proofs in every place he visited, after every sermon he delivered." This, next to the burning consciousness of salvation in his own soul, was the secret of his power. He preached, not because it was his professional business, but to *save souls*, and followed his sermons with other measures to bring his hearers to the point. And he died as he lived, shouting, Glory! glory! glory! at the age of sixty-four, and his remains lie buried in Salem, New Jersey, near his former residence.

Other distinguished ministers were called in like manner, about the same time, as Daniel Ruff, Jesse Lee, Freeborn Garrettson, and many more; but as they multiply we shall have to pass many of them without giving the slightest sketch of their operations.

INTERRUPTIONS FROM THE REVOLUTION.

From this period to the conference of 1784, when the societies were organized into a separate and distinct Church, they were subjected to various conflicts, which at times threatened their existence. One class of these arose from the Revolutionary struggle, which

commenced in 1776 and continued to 1783. War, in any circumstances, is disastrous to religion and virtue in the community at large. Where armies are marching and counter-marching through the country, and husbands and sons and brothers, of every neighborhood, are on the battle-field, amidst carnage and death, it is impossible to fix the public mind on any other subject, even where there is the utmost harmony in relation to the cause and objects of the war. But one unfortunate feature of this war was, that the community were divided about it, a part contending earnestly for independence and the other part for continued subordination to the mother country. On this question the father was often found arrayed against the son and the son against the father; the husband against the wife and the wife against the husband; for the women were nearly as strong politicians as the men. So that, had the ministers of the sanctuary been angels, they would have been exposed to the cruel jealousy of both parties, and, therefore, unlikely to convert either to the Lord. But they must have been more than angels to have gained great spiritual victories amid so much excitement, even in the absence of all jealousy.

But it was unfortunate for Methodism that most of our preachers were Englishmen. This exposed them to peculiar suspicion. It was still more unfortunate that some of them allowed their patriotism to betray them into imprudencies, which justly exposed them, not only to suspicion, but to other evils; and finally compelled them to leave the country. The difficulty was greatly argumented by a pamphlet published by Mr. Wesley, and addressed to Ameri-

cans, condemning their conduct, and taking sides with the English Cabinet. In the existing state of the public mind, these intimations of denominational toryism were demonstrative. But, as if to leave no room to doubt, a backslider must needs set himself to enlist three hundred men for the British standard, which cost him his life, and his old Methodist friends considerable trouble, as they were supposed to be parties to the plot.

The excitement arose to such a pitch that the preachers were greatly interrupted. Most of the missionaries returned to England, preferring that to taking the oath of allegiance. Mr. Asbury concealed himself at Judge White's, in Delaware, for almost one year, to avoid taking the oath exacted by the State of Maryland. Mr. Garrettson and others who ventured to continue in the field were severely mobbed, persecuted, and imprisoned. James Hartley preached through the grates of his prison, and many were awakened, till it was said if they retained him much longer he would convert the whole town. John-street Chapel, in New York, was occupied by the British troops for some five years, from 1777 to 1783, and no preacher was stationed in the town. Other points were entirely abandoned for the time, and the work suspended.

FURTHER TROUBLE ABOUT THE SACRAMENTS.

The question of the sacraments was another source of difficulty that came near destroying the unity of the body. The missionaries, and many others, were intent upon cleaving to Mr. Wesley and the Church, and would not countenance the adminis-

tration of the sacraments on any account; while some believed that Methodists had as good a right to the sacraments as Churchmen, and repudiated the practice of depending upon the English clergy, who were generally irreligious, if not immoral and profane. They therefore broke away from the old custom, and administered the sacraments as the people desired. Hence, the action had at the first conference. After this the subject was called up and discussed from time to time, till 1779, when the Southerners could stand it no longer, and, therefore, as they were in the minority, and could not get a vote in the conference to carry out their wishes, they called the preachers together, at Fluvanna, Virginia, on the 18th of May, where, in spite of many entreaties, they set up their standard, and appointed a committee to ordain ministers. The committee first ordained each other, and then they ordained their brethren, whereupon they all went forth preaching the Gospel of the kingdom, and administering the sacraments. Mr. Asbury labored hard to reclaim them, but in vain, till the conference of 1780, when he persuaded them to suspend their new order for one year. This suspension was continued until Mr. Wesley provided for the necessities of the society in a way that gave general satisfaction.

It was during this period, too, that Methodism commenced its conflict with slavery, and received its first onset from slaveholders. It dared then to say, in Baltimore, that "slavery is contrary to the laws of God, man, and nature, and hurtful to society; contrary to the dictates of conscience and pure religion, and doing that which we would not that others should do to us and ours." It spake out, also,

against distilling liquor, and warned the people against these evils, as too wicked to be tolerated.

REMARKABLE AWAKENINGS.

But in the midst of all their perplexities they prospered. God wrought mightily upon the public heart, and many were born of the spirit. Mr. Rankin's account of what he saw and felt on one occasion in Maryland, gives a pretty clear view of what was common in those times. He says:

“At four in the afternoon I preached again, from ‘I set before thee an open door, and none can shut it.’ I had gone through about two-thirds of my discourse, and was bringing the words home to the present *now*, when such power descended that hundreds fell to the ground, and the house seemed to shake with the presence of God. The chapel was full of white and black, and many were without that could not get in. Look wherever we would, we saw nothing but streaming eyes, and faces bathed in tears, and heard nothing but the groans and prayers of the congregation. I then sat down in the pulpit, and both Mr. S. and I were so filled with the divine presence that we could only say, ‘This is none other than the house of God! this is the gate of heaven!’ Husbands were inviting their wives to go to heaven, wives their husbands, parents their children, and children their parents, brothers their sisters, and sisters their brothers. In short, those who were happy in God themselves were for bringing all their friends to him in their arms. This mighty effusion of the Spirit continued for above an hour, in which many were awakened, some found peace with God, and

others his pure love. We attempted to speak or sing again and again, but we had no sooner begun than our voices were drowned.

“*Sunday, 7.* I preached at Watters’s Chapel. I intended to preach near the house, under the shade of some large trees, but the rain made it impracticable. The house was very greatly crowded; four or five hundred stood at the doors and windows, and listened with unabated attention. I preached from Ezekiel’s vision of dry bones: ‘And there was a great shaking.’ I was obliged to stop again and again, and beg of the people to compose themselves, but they could not; some on their knees, and some on their faces, were crying mightily to God all the time I was preaching. Hundreds of negroes were among them, with the tears streaming down their faces.”

Thus, by the divine blessing, the society stemmed the current, and gained a little every year, so that, in 1784, it numbered *eighty-three* traveling preachers, and 14,986 members.

ORIGIN OF THE UNITED BRETHREN.

It was during this period that the denomination known among us as “The United Brethren in Christ,” or “The German Methodists,” was organized. Rev. Mr. Otterbein, a well-educated minister of the German Reformed Church, born on the Rhine, came to Lancaster, Pennsylvania, in 1752, and, by some means, was led to seek a higher state of grace than was taught by his people. This spoiled him for the place he occupied, his Church preferring to abide in their usual condition of spiritual death. With the

aid of Mr. Asbury, he obtained the pastorate of a new church in Baltimore, Maryland, where he adopted most of the prudential arrangements of the Methodists, and soon organized the denomination before mentioned. He was an able man, a powerful preacher, and much admired by Mr. Asbury, and assisted Dr. Coke in ordaining him elder and superintendent. His followers now claim 967 traveling preachers, 742 local preachers, and 120,445 members. They are a plain, pious people, who adhere more rigidly to primitive Methodism than some others of less pretensions.

CHAPTER III.

THE SITUATION STATED—METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
ORGANIZED—PROGRESS OF THE CAUSE FROM 1784 TO
1792—CONGRATULATORY ADDRESS TO WASHINGTON—
JESSE LEE'S FIRST EFFORTS IN MASSACHUSETTS, ETC.

PRIOR to the conference of 1784, Methodists were *peculiar* in their Church relations, as in their spirit and modes of procedure. As we have already stated, Mr. Wesley's sole object was to revive spiritual religion in the Churches where he might labor, not to establish another Church. He therefore formed societies merely, and urged his followers to look to the Churches with which they might be identified for the sacraments—an awkward position, growing out of his prelatical notions. Mr. Asbury and most of his clerical associates had adhered rigidly to this policy, often to the great dissatisfaction of their followers; but, instead of reciprocating this extreme respect for the ridiculous assumptions of the Established Church, the clergy treated it with contempt.

Methodists were therefore left to choose between disobeying God by the neglect of the sacraments and receiving them at the hands of a godless ministry when and only when it should *condescend* to give them; but, at the breaking out of the war in 1775, most of the British clergy left the country and

returned to England, cutting off even this source of supply

THE EMERGENCY—HOW MET.

In this state of affairs many of our people properly refused to wait any longer for Mr. Wesley, and requested their own preachers to administer the sacraments, and they did so. Though they revered him and Mr. Asbury, they could but see the folly of their adherence to a Church that did nothing for them, and was ready to crush them at every point; besides, this country was now free from England and its Established Church, and had nothing to do with either. The Protestant Episcopal Church had not been organized. The Baptists, Presbyterians, and other religious sects were generally *Calvinistic*, and regarded Methodists as *peniters*. There was no way to evade the issue any longer. Mr. Wesley saw the emergency and prepared for it. He had *read* himself comparatively free from his High-church notions several years before, and believed that he had as much Gospel right to ordain ministers as any bishop in England, but had declined to do it to avoid a break with his Church. Besides, the bishops had refused to ordain his preachers, either for the home or foreign work. What ought he to do in these circumstances? His duty was plain, and he ordained Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey elders, and then he ordained Dr. Coke, already a presbyter of the Church of England, superintendent or bishop, all for the American work; and, having thus broken the ice, he afterward ordained others for Scotland, the West Indies, and even for England.

He also appointed Mr. Asbury *joint* superintendent, and authorized Dr. Coke to ordain him as such, and revised the liturgy of the English Church for that purpose, as well as for the ordination of deacons and elders. The necessity was imperative, and the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church was carried into effect on this basis, and gave general satisfaction. The result, we believe, clearly indicates the divine approval.

These good men arrived in New York on the 3d of November, 1784. After consultation with Mr. Asbury and others, it was agreed to call a conference of all the preachers, to convene in Baltimore the ensuing Christmas. The time arrived, and *sixty* of the *eighty-three* traveling preachers then in the connection appeared. Dr. Coke presided, assisted by Mr. Asbury. The first act of the conference was to elect Dr. Coke and Francis Asbury superintendents. This was done to accommodate the scruples of Mr. Asbury, who declined acting on the appointment of Mr. Wesley without such an election—not that he doubted his authority, but he wished to know that his appointment was approved by the body over which he was to preside. He was then first ordained deacon, afterward elder, and finally consecrated by Dr. Coke and others to the office of superintendent, all according to Mr. Wesley's directions. The conference then elected twelve others to the order of elder, who were duly consecrated by the imposition of hands. (Bangs's History, Vol. I, pp. 149-167)

The conference of 1784 also adopted our present articles of religion and the general system of disci-

pline by which the Church has since been governed. Her prudential arrangements have, of course, experienced various modifications, but the main features of the Discipline agreed upon at that time have been sacredly maintained to the present; and all was done, we repeat, by the advice and with the approval of Mr. Wesley. Indeed, he arranged nearly every thing in advance—the episcopacy, liturgy, doctrine, and Discipline, with a prayer-book. The prayer-book, however, with its accompanying trappings, the gown and bands, found little favor, and soon disappeared—we trust, forever—without any formal prohibition.

THE PRACTICAL WORKING OF THE SYSTEM.

Among the twelve elders ordained at this conference were Freeborn Garrettson and O. Cromwell, who were designated for Nova Scotia. It was proposed to ordain Mr. Garrettson superintendent for that country, but he wisely preferred to survey the ground first, and did so with his co-laborer, winning many souls to God. About two years after, he returned to the States, leaving six hundred members in societies, preaching in Boston, Providence, and Newport on his way to the conference at Baltimore. Here he learned that Mr. Wesley was desirous of having him ordained as above stated, including the West Indies in his diocese, and he consented to do so after another year, provided the people of his proposed supervision should indicate their approval in the mean time. Dr. Coke was satisfied, and gave him a letter to the brethren in the West Indies. Here the matter rested; but, to his astonishment, when the appointments were announced, he found

himself presiding elder in Maryland. How the change came to be made he never knew, and Mr. Wesley was much grieved by it. The next year he was set apart to open New England, but, finding the preacher at New York dying, he was obliged to take his place. But he did not confine himself to New York. Being supplied with several helpers, he pushed the work up north as far as Lake Champlain, planting little societies all along the way.

THE FIRST COLLEGE STARTED.

Another matter of importance connected with the organization of the Church, in 1784, was the establishment of a college at Abingdon, twenty-five miles from Baltimore, on a beautiful spot, embracing six acres, secured for the purpose. A brick building one hundred and eight feet long by forty feet wide was erected and dedicated in 1787. Its foundation was laid by Dr. Coke, "attired in his long silk gown and flowing bands." (O, what a narrow escape Methodism made from the pomposity of Churchism!) Ten years after, it was burned to the ground. Bishop Asbury inferred from this disaster, with some reason, that it was no part of the duty of the Methodist Episcopal Church to found colleges. Dr. Coke, however, moved for a new building, and made a good beginning in the way of obtaining the necessary funds, when his attention was directed to Baltimore, where a suitable edifice was purchased and Cokesbury College revived with flattering prospects. This was also consumed by fire in a few months, which convinced Dr. Coke and many others that the mission of Methodism, for the present, at

least, was saving souls rather than founding colleges, and little more was done in that direction for many years. Yet we must say that we have never seen any arrangements for the management of a literary institution so thoroughly religious as were those of Cokesbury College. They are certainly worthy of the careful consideration of the educators of our Church at the present day.

During 1785 three conferences were held, showing a considerable enlargement of the territory under cultivation, and an increase of 21 ministers and 3,012 members. It was at this time, too, that the office of presiding elder was originated, though it was not called by this name until 1789. Having ordained but twelve elders out of eighty-three preachers to serve 14,988 members, scattered abroad over the land, it was necessary to divide the work into districts, with an *elder* at the head of each to travel around and administer the sacraments. Had the preachers been generally ordained, as they now are, the office would not probably have been thought of. As it was, it soon became the source of more questioning and debate than any other in the Church, as will be seen hereafter. Its original foundations having been removed by the uniform ordination of the preachers, and no new powers having been assigned to it, some have failed to see sufficient reasons for its continuance.

There were also three conferences held in 1786, revealing an increase of 2,681 members. Here, too, we find the first mention of *colored* members as distinguished from others, showing that the preachers had given special attention to this unfortunate race.

The number reported this year was 1,869, one thousand of whom were connected with the mission at Antigua, and were soon after transferred to the care of the British Conference. The following year, the conference said:

“We conjure all our ministers and preachers by the love of God, and the salvation of souls, and do require them, by all the authority that is vested in us, to leave nothing undone for the spiritual benefit and salvation of the colored people, within their respective circuits or districts, and to exercise the whole Methodist discipline among them.”

And they found some prodigies, as we do now. Henry Hosier, called “Black Harry,” was one of them. He traveled as Bishop Asbury’s servant, and preached to colored people. Dr. Rush, of Philadelphia, pronounced him “the greatest orator in America.” He acted as driver for the bishops, participating in their religious services, and excelling all of them in popularity. They had no fears of putting Harry into the pulpit in their place. He was sure to give satisfaction. If they had any fears about a congregation, the announcement of his name would bring one. He died in the Lord in 1810, and was buried in Philadelphia with distinguished honor.

Our limits will not allow us to detail the travels and labors of the bishops. Suffice it to say they were always on the wing, supervising the work already established and opening new fields, reaching from New York to South Carolina and Georgia, and west into Kentucky and Ohio. Dr. Coke also visited England and the West Indies, from whence he

returned just in time to attend the conference of 1787. The last one for the year met at Baltimore, where his administration was called in question, he having exercised certain authority over the American work while in Europe, changing the time and place of the conference, and thus overriding the action of that body. But he made it all right at once by signing a paper promising not to repeat the offense, and to keep within the proscribed limits. (Bangs's History, Vol. I, page 257.) He was a live man, often acted without suitable deliberation, but always meaning well, and ready to retract when convinced of his error.

This was generally satisfactory, and the affair was a capital thing, on the whole, as it rebuked the first unauthorized exercise of authority in the bishops, and admonished them to be careful. But to make a sure thing of the correction, the conference answered the question in the minutes, "Who are the superintendents of our Church in these United States?" in the following suggestive words: "Thomas Coke (when present in the State's) and Francis Asbury." Besides, it indicates the vigilance with which the early fathers guarded their rights, and protected themselves against the exercise of excessive episcopal authority.

This same conference took another step in the direction of self-control. Mr. Wesley had appointed Garrettson and Whatcoat superintendents, and Dr. Coke urged their election on the ground of their previous pledge to obey Mr. Wesley during his life. But the conference fearing that Mr. Wesley would call Asbury home if they elected Whatcoat, declined to do so, without the least disrespect to him. And

to relieve themselves of any real or imaginary obligation to obey Wesley against their own judgment, they left their former commitment to obedience out of the published minutes.

This was probably a wise measure. The conference justly thought that they understood their circumstances and wants better than Mr. Wesley. It was the love of the cause that controlled their action. They had good reason to fear that Mr. Asbury would be taken from them. Asbury was not so aristocratic or Churchish as either Rankin or Coke, and some body had represented him in a way to Wesley to impair confidence in his loyalty.

CHANGE IN TITLE.

As we have before seen, Mr. Wesley, in revising the English Ritual for the use of the Methodist Episcopal Church, substituted the term superintendent for bishop, and elder for presbyter, as he had before employed the word society in place of Church. Still he meant bishop and presbyter just as much as if he had used the terms. The change was made to avoid giving offense. The conference of 1784 accepted these terms, knowing their import, and employed them till 1787, when they commenced to call their superintendents *bishops*, and so denominated them in their Discipline. But there was no reordination, no additional prerogatives imposed or assumed, no change whatever except in the *name*. It was not done by Coke nor Asbury, but by the conference, and was published in the Minutes as follows:

“We have constituted ourselves into an Episcopal *Church*, under the direction of *bishops*, *elders*,

deacons, and *preachers*, according to the form of ordination annexed to our prayer-book, and the regulations laid down in this form of discipline."

The conference, however, wrote a conciliatory letter to Mr. Wesley, inviting him to visit his American children, and get a better understanding of their situation and interests. But, notwithstanding, Mr. Wesley was afflicted that his name was left out of the Minutes, so to speak, in the matter of obedience before mentioned. He complained of this, and objected to the change of title of superintendent to bishop, for the same reason that he preferred superintendent at first; namely, because it might be less offensive to the National Church, no other whatever. But the Revolution had freed this country from allegiance to that body, and there was no reason outside of Mr. Wesley's preference why American Methodists should still crouch under the vain assumptions of a foreign hierarchy, that had only sought their ruin from the beginning. But there was *good* reason why they should openly and unmistakably avow their real position, as the first Protestant Episcopal Church in this country.

PROGRESS OF THE CAUSE.

This was a year of extraordinary revivals, attended with powerful preaching, prayer, conversions, and rejoicings, strange at that time, but similar to what we now see in many places, yielding an increase of sixteen ministers, and 5,161 members.

The year 1788 introduced Methodism along the Hudson, and north, to Lake Champlain, and gave some six hundred members to the Church. Bishop

Asbury crossed the Alleghany Mountains, finding plenty of sin and hard fare. He says, "We journeyed on through devious lonely wilds, where no food might be found, except what grew in the woods, or was carried with us. Near midnight we stopped at A——'s who hissed his dogs at us. Brothers Phœbus and Cook took to the woods. I lay along the floor on a few deer-skins with the fleas. That night our poor horses got no corn, and the next morning they had to swim across the Monongahela. O, how glad should I be of a plain, clean plank to lie on, as preferable to most of the beds."

Seven conferences were held this year. The one at Baltimore was attended with great power, and many were converted, and some three hundred added to the Church in that city. The increase for the year was 11,512 members and thirty-three preachers, more than double what it had ever been before in a single year. This great expansion of the work swelled the number of circuits, and called for more conferences. Accordingly eleven were held the year following, the most southernly in Georgia, and the most northernly in New York. One would have been sufficient, but for the vast extent of country embraced, and the difficulty of traveling. But though averaging less than sixteen preachers to each conference, they all grew to unmanageable proportions. This year, circuits were formed at Schenectady, New York, and Stamford Circuit, indicating progress, or at least, progressive intentions in these directions.

The conferences seeing that Mr. Wesley was afflicted by their leaving his name out of the min-

utes, as before stated, modified their action this year so as to recognize him as their chief bishop.

CONGRATULATORY ADDRESS TO WASHINGTON.

We have before hinted at the suspicion cherished during the war in relation to the preachers, and the persecutions they experienced from that source. This being the year of the adoption of the American Constitution and the election of Washington as first president, who was then attending Congress in the City of New York, where the conference was assembled, Dr. Coke suggested to the preachers the propriety of presenting a congratulatory address to him, avowing their approval of the Constitution, and their allegiance to the Government. The conference warmly and unanimously accepted it, and appointed him and Bishop Asbury to prepare one. The address was promptly written, indorsed by the conference, and Thomas Morrell and John Dickins were delegated to see the President, show him a copy of the address, and ascertain when it would suit his convenience to receive the bishops, and hear the address from them. The President appointed the fourth succeeding day, at twelve o'clock. They, accordingly, went, and Bishop Asbury read the address, to which the President read his reply. (See *Addresses*, Bangs's Hist., Vol. I, pp. 284, 285.) In a few days both documents appeared in the papers, much to the mortification of other denominations, which, though old and strong, had allowed the young Methodist Episcopal Church, an offshoot from Great Britain, to lead them in paying their respects to the first president, and to the government over which he presided. They,

nevertheless, followed the good example in due time. But somebody was too much stung by this circumstance, or too prejudiced against Methodism to keep quiet, and came out in the papers, inquiring, Who is this Dr. Coke? who made him a bishop? who consecrated him? etc., accompanied with various charges and criticisms, objecting particularly to a British subject signing an address approving of the American Government. This gave Mr. Morrell a fair chance to tell the public who the doctor was, where he came from, what he was doing, who the Methodists were, what they proposed, and to vindicate the Church. Thus, prejudice contributed again to help forward the cause which needed just such an exposition to draw attention to its movements.

If there was a little inconsistency in Dr. Coke's signing the address, as some of his countrymen thought, there was none in Bishop Asbury's doing so. His heart and citizenship were here, though a native Englishman. And few excelled him in his admiration of Washington. "Matchless man!" said he. "At all times he acknowledged the providence of God, and never was he ashamed of his Redeemer. We believe he died not fearing death. In his will he ordered the manumission of his slaves—a true son of liberty at all points." (*Journal*, Vol. II, p. 439.)

METHODISM IN NEW ENGLAND.

Though occasional sermons had been preached in New England prior to 1789, no systematic effort had been made to organize societies. Religion was established by law in two or three States, and Church and State were supported by the community at large,

and from a common treasury. Parish lines were strictly drawn, and rigid Calvinism was the prevailing doctrine taught by the clergy, though Unitarianism was beginning to appear at some points. Of course, Methodism was regarded as a dangerous innovation. In this state of affairs Jesse Lee visited Norwalk, Connecticut, June 17, 1789, and preached under an apple-tree in the road, no house, either public or private, being opened to him. The next day he rode to Fairfield, and preached in the court-house under great discouragements; but after the meeting he was directed by a lady at the tavern, where he stopped, to visit her sister, who was a very pious woman. He did so the day following, and found a little band of congenial spirits who had been praying for the coming of some such preacher. They were the fruits of the labors of Mr. Black, one of the preachers who passed through the place on his way from Nova Scotia to Baltimore, four years before. This gave him a grand start for a society. The following Sabbath he preached at New Haven in the court-house, with encouraging prospects. From there he went to Stratford, Milford, Danbury, and Canaan, which towns, with some others, he organized into a circuit, forming the first society at Stratford on the 26th of September following, consisting of three females, and the next at Reading, consisting of one male and one female. The first Methodist *Church* in New England was erected at Weston, Connecticut, and was called Lee's Chapel. The following February, Jacob Brush, George Roberts, and Daniel Smith, came to his assistance, meeting him at a quarterly-meeting at Dan-town, where the power of God was so manifested

that the people cried aloud for mercy, scaring the congregation so that some even jumped out of the windows. Going from place to place, preaching without a call, notes, pay, or churches, and making no little stir among the people, the clergy opened upon them, calling them "wolves in sheeps' clothing," "false prophets, who should come in the latter day," etc., and warned the people to stand aloof. Many, however, followed them; sinners were converted, and societies began to multiply.

Long Island, too, which was slightly opened by Captain Webb, but suffered great disturbances from the war, received new attention, and entered upon a career which has resulted in a church in nearly every village, divided now into two presiding elders' districts, embracing, at present, 19,334 members and probationers.

A NEW LEGISLATIVE PROJECT.

The conferences having multiplied, the difficulty of doing business authoritatively had greatly increased, as no action of any one of them was valid unless approved by the others; and the gathering of all the preachers into one conference seemed quite inconvenient, if not impossible. To meet these difficulties it was agreed to form a *council*, to consist of the bishops and presiding elders, with plenary powers to act for the whole body, under certain limitations. The plan was ill-advised, and liable to many objections. The council, however, met twice, and held pleasant sessions, but was found, on further consideration, to be sadly wanting, making the bishops and their appointees—the presiding elders—legislators as well as

administrators. It then gave way, and its objects were afterward provided for by the organization of the General Conference.

OF BOOKS AND TRACTS.

Mr. Wesley, as we have noticed, began the publication of religious books and tracts at the very outset of his reformatory career, and required his assistants and helpers to circulate them. His followers in this country at first obtained their supplies from him at a liberal cost, and much inconvenience. But, having become an independent Church, and needing denominational books, which he did not publish, Rev. John Dickins was constituted "book-steward" this year, and commenced the publishing business in Philadelphia on a borrowed capital of six hundred dollars, which he loaned to the conference. He first issued Thomas à Kempis's "Imitation of Christ," to which he soon added the "Saint's Rest," "Primitive Physic," and a hymn-book, for use in the Churches, to take the place of one previously obtained of Mr. Wesley. This is the beginning of our Book Concerns, which we shall hereafter notice more fully in a separate chapter.

OTHER EVIDENCES OF PROGRESS.

The year 1790 opened with 196 traveling preachers, and 43,262 members, showing a considerable increase. "Let us labor," said the conferences, "as the heart and soul of one man, to establish Sunday-schools." "Let persons be appointed to teach *gratis*, all that will attend, from six in the morning till ten, and from two in the afternoon till six;" and the

council was requested to compile a school-book to "teach learning and piety." This was the first organized effort to establish Sunday-schools on the continent. Asbury formed the first school of the kind four years before, at Thomas Cranshaw's house, in Virginia. This was the beginning of that magnificent system of Sabbath-school operations which now spreads its net-work over the whole country.

This was also a year of revivals, yielding a net increase of 31 preachers, 14,369 members, but it involved an immense amount of personal sacrifice and hard work. Asbury crossed the Alleghany Mountains again, some of which arose before him like the "roof of a house." He swam several creeks, too; slept in log huts and in the woods, and traveled 2,578 miles, chiefly on horseback (there being no railroads or steamboats then), between December 14, 1789, and April 20, 1790. But in the midst of his toils, he exclaimed, "Glory! glory to our God." Though he was surrounded by wild beasts, and sometimes by murderous Indians, the Lord preserved him. Returning to the sea-board, he was accompanied by some fifty others, twenty of whom were armed.

THE WORK COMMENCED IN MASSACHUSETTS.

Methodism was this year carried to Boston. Mr. Boardman had preached there in passing some eighteen years before, but no permanent stand was attempted. Mr. Lee, having established several circuits in Connecticut, thought it time to try his fortune in Massachusetts. He therefore wandered along through the country to Boston uninvited and

unheralded. He was not met by the governor's son and a troop of ministers and honorable citizens ten miles out to be escorted into the city, as was Whitefield many years before. After spending a week in reconnoitering to find a place to preach, and being refused on every side, he borrowed a table, and placed it under the old elm near the center of the common, planted himself upon it in Quakerish costume, and began to sing and pray with a congregation of four persons. At the close of the service it had increased to three thousand. The next Sabbath he repeated the experiment in the same place, and preached to many more; but his success was not great. Though his appearance and style of address were quite singular, and calculated to excite curiosity, and his doctrines more consistent than those which generally prevailed in the community, the people were slow to favor his cause.

Rigid Calvinism was then the prevailing theology of the State, and no man could hold a civil office or vote who did not belong to the Church, and property was taxable to support the Church, whether its owners believed its doctrines or not. To favor Methodism, therefore, cost one the sacrifice of every earthly interest. Only such as were brought to feel that they must do so, or jeopard their souls dared to do it. Those who believed that God had *elected* all he intended to save, and that he would call and convert them in his "own good time," regarded the universal atonement, taught by Mr. Lee, as a most dangerous heresy, though it is difficult to see how it could be so, if all things were settled from eternity. The few who rejected this doctrine, generally

discarded the divinity of Christ, and the new birth, and could not receive him because he maintained both. Besides, spiritual religion was extremely low, the elect often giving little better evidence of piety than some who were accounted reprobates. Conversion was not considered indispensable for ministers of the Gospel, if they were well educated and were sound in the "doctrines of grace;" that is, in Calvinism. Nor was it deemed a necessary prerequisite to participation in the Lord's-supper. Mr. Lee's chances for success, therefore, looking on the human side of the question, were not very flattering.

But, then, he had good common-sense—good sound theology, that he knew how to explain and defend from the Bible—a multitude of demonstrative practical facts, acquired by reading and observation, and a most blessed and happy *present* experience of the religion which he recommended to others. Though not a linguist, he had a little knowledge of *Dutch*, which he had picked up in the Middle States, and it sometimes helped him out. For, when his theological critics addressed him in Greek or Latin to demonstrate his ignorance, he would answer in Dutch, which was as incomprehensible to them as Greek was to him. With these endowments he was prepared to meet every emergency, and make an impression on the judgment and hearts of his hearers. Assailing pre-election, pre-reprobation, final perseverance, limited atonement, infant damnation, etc., fundamental sentiments of the day, he could but create a sensation. Then preaching without notes, and in the evening without a candle, in the streets and fields when he could do no better, a failure seemed hardly possible.

Yet he did not effect a permanent opening, and passed on to Lynn, Newburyport, and Portsmouth. On his return, he tried Boston again, but in vain, and had to resort to his old stand on the common. After attending the conference in New York, he returned to Boston, where he spent several weeks to secure a place to preach, but utterly failed. Every house was closed against him. In the midst of these discouragements, which were much aggravated by an empty purse, he received a letter from a gentleman in Lynn, inviting him to his house. This was a ray of light. After making other fruitless efforts, he left and went, letter in hand, to Benjamin Johnson's in Lynn, and was cordially received. Here he preached the first Methodist sermon ever delivered in that town, and felt at home. The people proposed to form a society at once, but he put them off until he should give unimpressible Boston another trial. February 20, 1791, he returned to Lynn, and formed a society of eight members, which was increased to *seventy* in three months, and culminated finally in the old Lynn Common Church, the honored mother of a dozen vigorous daughters, still flourishing under her maternal smiles. The 14th of June following, they commenced to build the first Methodist Church in Massachusetts. It was raised on the 21st of the same month, and dedicated on the 26th, though a mere wooden shell, without form or comeliness, but a great deal better than nothing.

Making Lynn his head-quarters, Mr. Lee sallied forth in all directions, not overlooking Boston, which seemed to be his special point of interest. Fortunately the ice began to yield, though no society was

formed there until the next year, nor in any other place in the State except in Lynn. He also went to Maine and planted his standard in that Province. New Hampshire and Rhode Island, too, shared his labors. The work was hard and difficult, but God was with him, and the seed sown took root in many places, and he returned to the south, leaving that new field in such other hands as Providence had furnished.

Some eighteen years after (1808), he visited it again, and found that it had ripened into the New England Conference, with six districts; namely, Boston, New London, Vermont, New Hampshire, Portland, and Kennebeck, presided over by noble men whose names will never be forgotten, as follows: John Brodhead, Elijah R. Sabin, Thomas Branch, Elijah Hedding, Joshua Soule, and Oliver Beale. He also found 8,861 members. Daniel Webb and Martin Ruter were stationed, at Boston, over three hundred and forty members, all of whom received him as their father. He preached the first evening in the old church, and the next in the new, and passed on to Lynn, to be greeted by Dan Young, the pastor, and one hundred and seventy members. Maine and New Hampshire opened their arms wide to receive him, and say "farewell until we meet in heaven." A crowd attended him every-where, so that the churches could not accommodate them, and he preached to them in the forest. He spent forty-three days in Maine, and preached forty-seven sermons. Hurrying to New Hampshire, he preached seven farewell sermons in less than a week, and about the same number in less time in Connecticut, when he fled to Garrettson's

"*Traveler's Rest*," at Rhinebeck, New York. It was a great occasion for him and for the multitudes who listened to his patriarchal words.

Such was the beginning of Methodism in New England. It cost a struggle; and the struggle has continued ever since, though generally with much less heroism and persistence. Less effort than was made by Lee to plant Methodism in Boston, with our present facilities, would establish a church in every considerable town in the State.

But the investment has paid well, 1. In the conversion and organization of tens of thousands of sinners, some of whom still remain in the Churches, numbering over forty thousand in Massachusetts alone. 2. In the overthrow of a system of doctrines calculated to sap the foundation of all Christian motives and enterprise, so that it is now maintained, if at all, in comparative silence. 3. In the quickening of other Christian Churches; most of whom have largely adopted our sentiments, music, and methods of social worship and progress, much to their improvement in all respects. 4. In exploding and neutralizing sundry other errors that could not be successfully resisted from the stand-point of preordination, as formerly understood and preached.

But notwithstanding these changes in the community for the better, there is ample room for Methodists, and our chances for usefulness were never more flattering than now, provided that we maintain the "*joy of salvation*," and adhere to our original object; namely, to *save sinners*. If we lay this aside and apply ourselves to minor and collateral interests, however good, and lower our spiritual temper to the

philosophical frigidity of the times, we shall fail. Methodism must be aggressive or perish. It was made for war, not peace; for motion, not rest; for advance, not retreat. The moment we become satisfied with "holding our own," we begin to die. And when we shall determine in the spirit of Jesse Lee to plant a Church in every town where needed, at whatever cost, it will be done. Formerly other denominations were afraid of us, now they are not. Christians of all sects will welcome us when they see that we have the right spirit, and aim to do good.

CHAPTER IV

GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1792—SECESSION OF O'KELLY—
PROGRESS OF THE WORK—REMARKABLE MEN AND OCCA-
SIONS—ORIGIN OF CAMP-MEETINGS—GENERAL CONFER-
ENCE OF 1800, ETC.

THE first General Conference after the organization of the Church met at Baltimore, November 1, 1792. It is called general, because all the preachers in full connection were invited to attend it. The several conferences which had been held from year to year were sectional, and embraced only a few of the preachers near the place of meeting, and no action was valid unless indorsed by all of them. This was not only inconvenient, but dangerous to the harmony of the connection. The council before mentioned was designed to remedy this evil, but the preachers were justly afraid to put so much power into the hands of the bishops, and after two meetings the arrangement was dropped by common consent, Asbury requesting that it might never be mentioned again in the conference, though he was the reputed father of it. Its death was a triumph to liberal views.

This conference, like its predecessors, was under no disciplinary restriction, and had free course with doctrine and discipline to alter both at discretion. It therefore wisely determined at the outset that it

should require a vote of *two-thirds* of the conference to make a new rule or to abolish an old one.

Before noticing the action of this body, it may be well to remind the reader that it was but twenty-six years previous to this time that the first Methodist sermon was preached in the country, and eight years since the Church was organized with bishops, elders, and the sacraments, and that it numbered 266 traveling preachers and 65,980 members. The population of the country was then about *four millions*; hence, reckoning three friends to one member, nearly one-fifteenth of the whole people must have affiliated with the Methodists, which indicates a wonderful growth for so short a time. Other denominations commenced their work here with the first settlement of the country, and had every thing in their favor. Methodists began later and encountered much opposition, yet they prospered beyond all precedent. The secret of their success will be considered hereafter.

THE FIRST SECESSION—ITS CAUSE AND CONSEQUENCES.

Their itinerant policy was not tempting to ministerial pride and ambition. Indeed, it was exceedingly offensive to some, being in glaring conflict with the boasted republicanism of the day. The second day of the conference, James O'Kelly, a flaming Irishman, and one of the ablest members, introduced a resolution requiring the bishops to report the appointments of the preachers to the conferences, and to make changes in them as the conferences might suggest. This led to a powerful debate, which continued for several days, when the resolu-

tion was rejected by a large majority. Mr. O'Kelly was offended, and withdrew from the body. Every thing was done to conciliate him, but without lasting effect. After a time, he commenced a violent crusade against the Church, and drew off several preachers and people—in some places whole societies; and, to secure the patronage of the leading political party of Virginia, he organized them under the imposing name of “Republican Methodists.” But, this not working to his satisfaction, the name was changed to “The Christian Church,” which seemed to unchristianize all other denominations, and brought a storm about his ears that was not anticipated; but the old man struggled on, abused the Church from the pulpit and in pamphlets in the severest manner, and did an immense amount of mischief. But he found it easier to break down the old Church than to organize a better one. All the traveling preachers he took with him returned except one, but the members were strangely scattered, so that the Church suffered a decrease during the four following years of nearly *eleven thousand*. At length his popularity waned, and his society fell into differences, and the whole thing exploded, having done much harm and little if any good. O'Kelly died October 16, 1826, in the ninety-second year of his age, a disappointed old man, not only mortified with the failure of his own mighty efforts to establish a better Church, but with the rapid progress of the one that brought him to God and gave him an honorable position, which had increased, since his defection, in 1792, from 266 preachers and 65,980 members to 1,406 preachers and 360,884 members. Bishop Asbury, who seemed

to be the object of his special hatred, being in Virginia, the field of his operations, and hearing of his sickness, called and prayed with him, but without eliciting any reference to former times or troubles.

This was the first secession from the Methodist Episcopal Church of any note. Like all its successors, it was on governmental, not doctrinal grounds, and resulted from impatience in seeking what were considered to be improvements. The same question was then agitating the British Conference, and was carried, the stationing committee being required to report to the conference, when any aggrieved brother might ask and receive a change in his appointment, if the conference deemed it advisable. O'Kelly had strong supporters—even a majority, it is said, at first—and, had he been less severe and more patient, he might have secured some satisfactory modification. The masterly debate elicited by his proposition surprised the bishops, who had no idea of the ability of their helpers till it was there developed. Says Bishop Asbury: "We continued our conference for fifteen days. I had always entertained very high ideas of the piety and zeal of the American preachers, and of the considerable abilities of many; but I had no expectation, I confess, that the debates would be carried on in so masterly a manner." Some unpleasant feelings were excited, but, after all, peace generally prevailed.

But the effects of this movement did not soon disappear. Some who seceded lost their religion and their souls, we fear; others, who retained some regard for the cause, became too much disaffected to be at home and useful in any Church, while a preju-

dice was created against Methodism and religion itself, in the community, that was not easily overcome. But it settled the question of appeal from the appointment of the bishops for some time.

We hear no more of restricting the appointing power until the year 1800, when Dr. Coke introduced it, and finally recommended that the new bishop (not applying it at all to Bishop Asbury) be assisted in making the appointments by a committee of three or four preachers to be chosen by the conference. This was rejected, with several propositions of like effect. The next that was heard about restricting the appointing power was in the year 1808, when it was proposed so to alter the Discipline as to allow the conferences to elect the presiding elders. This proposition was ably discussed, and rejected by a vote of *seventy-three* to *fifty-two*. In 1812, the same question was again introduced, and, after a thorough discussion, the proposition was rejected by a majority of only three. Four years later, it met the same fate, though it was presented in a modified form. In 1820, it was again discussed, and disposed of as before; but, there being considerable feeling on the subject, it was called up again in the spirit of compromise, and referred to a committee composed of an equal number of brethren of different views, to confer with the bishops and strike out some course that might conciliate all parties. Their report recommended that on the occurrence of vacancies in the presiding eldership, the presiding bishop should nominate three times the number wanted, out of which the conference should elect the necessary number by ballot, and the presiding elders thus

elected should be an advisory council to the bishops in appointing the preachers. The report was adopted by a vote of *sixty-one* in favor to *twenty-five* against it, and it was supposed this would put the question to rest, perhaps forever.

But this was not the case. Bishop Soule, who had been elected to the episcopal office a few days previous, signified to the conference that he thought the measure unconstitutional, and he should not conform to it. Bishop M'Kendree, in a feeble state of health, urged that it was unconstitutional, and subversive of the superintendency, and also of the itinerancy. The former tendered his resignation, which was accepted, and the conference adhered to its position; but, considering the age of Bishop M'Kendree, the decision of Bishop Soule, and the anxiety of many others, it was voted to suspend the new rule for four years. The next General Conference continued the suspension; but, in 1828, the rule was rescinded, since which little has been attempted on the subject.

The first General Conference was composed of all the traveling preachers who pleased to attend. In the year 1800, it was limited to those who had traveled four years. In 1808, it was agreed that it should be composed in future of one delegate for every five members of each annual conference. The ratio of representation has since been altered, as the ministry has increased in number. It is now *one* clerical delegate to every *forty-five* members, besides several lay delegates, and the conference assembles May 1st, once in four years, and is governed by a constitution, limiting its powers, adopted also in

1808. This constitution is popularly known as the "Restrictive Rules," and may be seen in the Discipline, in the section which defines the duties and powers of the General Conference.

PROGRESS OF THE WORK.

Taking our leave of the conference of 1792, we move pleasantly along amid labors and triumphs for many years. The men on whom it devolved to command, in those days, were extraordinary characters. Dr. Coke, Bishop Asbury, Jesse Lee, George Roberts, Freeborn Garrettson, Ezekiel Cooper, Benjamin Abbott, and others, acted a chivalrous part, and left their successors an example of prudent legislation and of heroic effort that can never be forgotten. New England was about the hardest field they found to cultivate; but even this yielded to their perseverance, and many societies were organized. Methodists in two of these States were obliged to pay their parish taxes to support the Calvinistic clergy, have their property attached, or go to jail. Several distinguished men, known to the writer, have passed away within a few years, who submitted to imprisonment, because they could not conscientiously pay taxes to support a system they believed to be false and dangerous, the parish thinking a little prison discipline would have a better effect in subduing their obstinacy than the loss of a few articles of property which it might have taken. Others had their goods seized to meet parish claims, when it was known they were Methodists, and supported Methodist preaching. But this state of things could not long endure. The "right of peti-

tion" had not then been trampled down, and Methodists, and others who were not so wedded to popular views as to be blind to the claims of justice, prayed the honorable court of legislation to allow them to worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences. They were only ridiculed at first, but afterward they succeeded in throwing off the *yoke*, and securing the right of thinking for themselves, and sustaining such views and modes of worship as they considered Scriptural. How much the various classes of dissenters in Massachusetts and Connecticut owe to the Methodists for the liberties they have long enjoyed in this particular, they can not now realize.

Methodism was little less troublesome by reason of its Arminian theology than by its methods. It broke over parish lines, that had been drawn by law with great precision, and planted itself wherever sinners could be induced to repent and believe the Gospel. And its ministry, instead of taking any particular location, ransacked the whole country, and excited the people to think about their souls. All these things, and many others, created a prejudice, and brought out the clergy in violent resistance of the new measures. The pulpit rang with denunciations of Methodism. Its real views were misrepresented; its errors were magnified; its ministers decried as the false prophets and deceivers that should come, and its assemblies persecuted and scattered. But, nevertheless, the Lord converted some, and the cause lived, not to be loved, we fear, by the dominant sect, but to be more patiently endured, if not respected. And not only so, but it lived to modify

the body that at first repelled it with the greatest virulence and force. Not that it was entirely converted to the new faith or modes of operation, but it became so essentially improved in its public instructions, and various movements for the conversion of souls, as to look very unlike its former self. This, we trust, will not be denied. It has been recognized on both sides of the house. Methodists have rejoiced to see their theology and ecclesiastical regimen transforming and imbuing other systems, and the rigid Calvinist has mourned over the defection of his people, and longed for the good old days, now, alas! forever gone.

In other States and territories Methodism had less of this kind of opposition to resist. Much of the country was new, and Methodists were permitted to take an even start with other Christian sects. The result was, in many places they commanded the faith and affections of the people, and have been the leading denomination ever since, proving the superior adaptation of their system to convert men to God, where it can have an "open field and fair play," by exceeding all its competitors in rapid growth and influence.

Dr. Bangs speaks of its early conflicts in these words:

"For some time the number of Methodists in this country was so inconsiderable that other denominations affected to treat them with silent contempt; and if, occasionally, they condescended to notice them at all, it was more in the way of caricature and misrepresentation than by sober argument, or an attempt at a fair and direct refutation of their doctrine

and usages. The high churchman would sneer at our *ordination*, and, wrapping himself in the cloak of apostolical succession, with an air of assumed dignity, prate about 'John Wesley's lay bishops,' as though these jokes were sufficient to put us out of countenance. Others, panoplied in the stern decrees of Calvin, and priding themselves in their exclusive orthodoxy, would tantalize us, 'with salvation by the *merit of good works*, the omnipotency of *free-will*, and the unsoundness of our doctrine of justification;' while some would smile at '*baby baptism*,' as an affront offered to the Deity, and an innovation upon apostolic usage."

OF CHURCH LEGISLATION.

In respect to Church legislation in the early times of which we are speaking, it needs only be said it was moderate; consisting in those slight changes which the progress of the cause seemed to demand. The General Conference of 1796 contemplated the numerous locations that had annually occurred with deep regret. And yet, while the labor was so excessively hard, the fare so poor, and the liability of premature old age, with poverty and want, was so great, there was little room to complain. To relieve these difficulties, and, if possible, check the tendency to location, the conference established what is now known as the "Chartered Fund," and provided for an address to the people to meet the emergency, by contributing of their substance. Though this measure did not make up the deficiencies of the preachers' claims, it did something toward it, and has since afforded partial relief; but whether it has not been

the occasion of more withholding on the part of the people is a question.

This fund is held by an incorporated Board of Trustees located in Philadelphia (all laymen), and amounted in 1872, to \$40,117.75, well invested. The interest is distributed annually among the conferences, each receiving the same amount. (See *Journal* for 1872, pp. 707-709.)

While we are obliged to admire the management of the preachers in those early times, it does seem as though they were too timid in asking for the bare necessities of life. Allowing themselves to receive only the merest trifle, prohibiting funeral and marriage fees, or even personal presents, how could they expect preachers without property and with families to give all their time to the ministry? Locations were the necessary result of thus shutting off providential supplies, and the increase of members was proportionally greater than the increase of preachers. But fortunately for the cause the preachers did not quit preaching when they left the itinerancy.

INCIDENTS OF THE WORK.

Nineteen conferences were held in 1793, fourteen the following year, and seven the next, when they varied from seven to nine per year. The boundaries of them were not then specifically defined, and preachers belonged to districts, rather than conferences, until 1802, when the minutes indicated their conference also. In 1793, all of New York, New England, and Canada, belonged to the New York Conference. That year New England was divided into two districts, and placed in charge of Ezekiel

Cooper and George Roberts, while Lee, who opened up the territory, as we have shown, was stationed in the province of Maine and Lynn, a pretty broad field for one *station* and one man. Roberts was soon prosecuted and fined for performing the marriage ceremony; but this only hastened the overthrow of denominationaal tyranny. This year, too, the New London Circuit was formed, with a class of fifty members. Also the Warren Circuit, including half a dozen towns, which gave birth the following year to the first Methodist Church in Rhode Island, located at Warren. That State was settled by Roger Williams, an exile from Massachusetts, settled for conscience' sake, and it was open to all classes. And though the Baptists were in the majority, and were much given to proselyting, Methodists could cope with them as they have not always been able to do; for their Discipline then contained the following wise provision:

“*Question* 46. What shall be done with those who were baptized in their infancy, but have now scruples concerning the validity of infant baptism?

“*Answer*. Remove their scruples by argument if you can; if not, the office may be performed by immersion or sprinkling, as the person desires.” (His. of Dis. of 1843, p. 45.)

Methodism was introduced singularly enough to Providencetown, Cape Cod, in 1795, by one of the preachers who was driven into the harbor by contrary winds. But wicked men did not want it, and seized the timber gathered for the first church, and nearly destroyed it; but this probably turned to the furtherance of the cause. All these places now

have churches, which hardly indicate so small a beginning.

REMARKABLE MEN AND OCCASIONS.

But it was not in *ordinary* men to stem the tide of sin and ignorance that generally prevailed through the country. God, therefore, raised up peculiar characters, and endowed them to meet the emergency. Calvin Wooster was one of them, whose fervency of spirit led him to volunteer as a missionary to Upper Canada. After lodging *twenty-two* nights in the wilderness, he arrived with his companion, Samuel Coate, on the Bay of Quinte, just in time to attend a quarterly-meeting. After preaching, he remained in the meeting to pray for inquirers, while the presiding elder, Darius Dunham, retired to hold a conference with the official brethren. While thus engaged, the power of God fell on the people, and filled many with joy unspeakable, who praised the Lord aloud. Others fell prostrate on the floor. The elder coming in, and beholding this tumultuous state of things, kneeled down and began to pray to God to "stop the wild-fire," as he called it. In the mean time, brother Wooster whispered out in prayer, "Lord, bless brother Dunham! Lord, bless brother Dunham!" After some minutes he prevailed, and brother Dunham fell on the floor, and was filled with the Spirit. This fire he carried all around his district, to the joy of many souls.

Mr. Wooster was eminently a man of prayer, and was often heard in the night pleading for the salvation of sinners. Such, indeed, was his fervency, that the wicked could not stand before him. They would

either flee or cry for mercy. Other preachers were much like him in this particular. While one was preaching in that neighborhood, a trifling man commenced to swear, and otherwise disturb the meeting. The preacher paid no attention to him for a while; but feeling strong in God, he at length suddenly stopped, and, fixing his piercing eye on the offender, stamping his foot, and pointing his finger at him with great energy, he cried out, "*My God! smite him!*" The man instantly fell to the floor, as if shot, when such power overwhelmed the congregation that sinners roared for mercy on every side. (Bangs's His., Vol. II, pp. 72-74.)

In 1798, Wooster finished his course, saying, "The nearer I draw to eternity, the brighter heaven shines upon me." It is said that when so weak that he could only whisper, his whispered words announced to the congregation by another would overwhelm sinners so that they would sometimes fall to the floor. His history, written by himself, and found among his papers, is as follows:

"Hezekiah Calvin Wooster was born May 20, 1771; convicted of sin October 9, 1791; born again December 1, 1791; sanctified February 6, 1792."

The year 1793 brought Henry Boehm to the saving knowledge of the truth, who afterward entered the ministry, and but recently celebrated the centennial anniversary of his life. Acting as circuit preacher, presiding elder, and traveling companion to Bishop Asbury for several years, he has personally seen more of American Methodism than any living man. Still, he retains the old fire which made him happy in the days of his strength, when he endured

hardness as a good soldier of the cross, traveling on horseback from State to State, with few of the comforts of life to cheer him. While he has lacked the eccentricity, oratory, or brilliancy which throng the steps of some men, he has maintained a joyous, self-sacrificing piety, with a dignified, Scriptural, powerful ministry, that has won him friends and admirers every-where, and rendered him mighty to the pulling down of strongholds. He is the honored representative of a large class of preachers, who will rank higher in heaven than some who have been more distinguished on earth.

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1796.

It convened at Baltimore, and was composed of one hundred and twenty members. To this time the bishops had held as many annual conferences as they deemed necessary. Here they were reduced to six, and their names and bounds determined. This conference also adopted and printed a deed to secure Church property to its intended use, which has contributed very much to the welfare of Methodism, exploding the slander that the bishops owned the churches, and preventing malcontents from perverting them to improper uses. Besides, it forbade the sale and use of intoxicating liquors by members of the Church, though this was more than thirty years before the commencement of the public reformation on this question, which is still in progress.

FIRST CONFERENCES IN NEW ENGLAND.

The first conference in New England was held in Wilbraham, Massachusetts, in 1797; but owing to

the illness of Bishop Asbury, Jesse Lee presided, at his request, and by vote of the conference. But the whole membership in New England, at that time, was less than three thousand, and of Massachusetts only about nine hundred. Two years after, another conference convened at Readfield, Maine, when Vergennes, in Vermont, and Providence, in Rhode Island, were added to the list of circuits, showing that the cause was advancing, though slowly. The amount of labor and sacrifice involved in these beginnings is incredible.

ORIGIN OF CAMP-MEETINGS.

The year 1799 was distinguished for the origination of "camp meetings." This wonderful means of grace was providential in its conception. Two brothers by the name of *M'Gee*, one a Presbyterian minister, and the other a Methodist, went to attend a sacramental occasion with Rev. Mr. *M'Gready*, a Presbyterian minister in West Tennessee. The Methodist preached first, and was followed by the Presbyterian and the Rev. Mr. Hoge, whose preaching produced a powerful effect. One woman became so deeply impressed she shouted aloud for joy, and there were other demonstrations of an extraordinary character. Messrs. M'Gready, Hoge, and Rankins, all Presbyterian ministers, left the house; but the M'Gees remained to see the salvation of God. Great was the power that rested upon them. John was expected to preach, but he told the people that his feelings were such he could not, and sat down amid sobs and cries from every quarter. This brought the people out to see what these things might mean.

Many came a great distance with horses and wagons and provisions; and so numerous was the crowd the church would not contain them. This drove them into the forest; and the distance of many from home, and the impossibility of obtaining accommodations among the people, made it necessary for them to camp out.

This was something new, and attracted great attention. And it was no less effective. The different denominations, seeing that God was in the measure, gave it their countenance; but one after another withdrew, until it was left almost exclusively to the Methodists. Since that time they have employed it to good purpose, notwithstanding its old friends have said many hard things against it. In the early days of Methodism, when meeting-houses were few and preachers scarce, camp-meetings were peculiarly useful. Hundreds were converted through their instrumentality. In the course of the eight years following their introduction, the net increase to the Church was *eighty-two thousand six hundred and sixty-four members*, and a corresponding increase of preachers.

The manner in which the Spirit wrought upon the people at these meetings did more to convince them that Methodism was of God than all other means. Infidels and worldly professors would go out to see for themselves, proudly feeling that they could not be moved, and yet in half an hour would be overwhelmed with conviction. A gentleman and lady visiting one, full of self-conceit, jocosely agreed if one of them should fall, the other should stand by and not leave. They had not been there long before

the lady fell, and the funny gentleman, false to his pledge, left in hot haste, but had not proceeded far before he went down also, and was soon surrounded by the praying multitude. With some such earnest convictions terminating in the joys of salvation, and a new heart, it was not easy to doubt the divine reality of the work. Nor was it easy for observers to doubt who felt nothing of the kind, when they saw their godless neighbors transformed in this manner. Camp-meetings did more in this way in support of real orthodoxy than all the reasonings of the ages.

They were particularly adapted to the western wilderness. Following the early emigrants, without churches, they furnished great occasions, which were not then very frequent, and called together all sorts of people for hundreds of miles around. Many getting converted would return home with new hearts and commence meetings, inviting the preachers to come and see them. In this way the foundation of many societies was laid that never would have been heard of but for camp-meetings. These meetings were just the thing for the times and the country.

And they are hardly less popular or valuable now that we have so many churches. Bringing together the more devout of our preachers and people, they affect many who could not be reached at home. Besides, they help to promote spiritual life in the Churches. God grant that they may never be perverted and employed for secular purposes!

GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1800.

Bishop Asbury's advancing age and abounding labors, involving some *six thousand* miles of travel a

year, generally on horse-back in rain and snow, swimming rivers and creeks, sleeping in huts and barns and in the forest, together with "the care of all the Churches," Dr. Coke being absent from the country most of the time, was telling terribly on his health. Indeed, he would have died long before, but for his indomitable will and zeal for God. In view of his extreme feebleness, he determined to resign his office, drop back into the ranks at this conference, and let younger and stronger men take his place. But the conference loved the bishop for his noble, self-sacrificing heroism, and avowing it, entreated him to hold fast, and do what his health would permit. Seeing the cordiality with which this was done, the bishop waived his purpose and continued.

Dr. Coke was also in some uncertainty as to his course. He was fully committed to the conference by previous engagements. But the British Conference had earnestly desired his release and return to England. He had been vibrating between the two countries ever since he came out in 1784. After much deliberation, the conference consented to his return, on the condition that he should come back as soon as practicable, certainly by the next General Conference. This left the Church with only one available bishop, and he broken down with years and labors. One more certainly must be elected.

This brought up another question; namely, should he be equal in authority, or only an *assistant* and subordinate. After much conversation, it was determined, very fortunately for Methodism, that he should be in every way equal in power with his senior in office. This settled the policy of the

Church on this important point, which has been maintained to the present day, thus blocking further imitation of the English Church in this direction, and keeping out of our vocabulary the high-sounding titles of archbishops, prelates, etc.

RICHARD WHATCOAT ELECTED BISHOP.

This done, the conference proceeded to ballot for a bishop, giving a tie vote for Richard Whatcoat, whom Mr. Wesley had appointed to the office several years before, and Jesse Lee, the pioneer of New England. On the second ballot Whatcoat was elected by *fifty-nine* votes against *fifty-five* cast for Lee, and was duly consecrated on the 18th of May by Bishops Coke and Asbury, assisted by several elders. Both were true men and every way worthy of the office. Whatcoat was an Englishman, assisted in the organization of the Church, and was, at his consecration, sixty-four years of age. All would probably have voted for him, but for the fact that Lee was his equal in all respects,—an American by birth and in his sympathies, and a younger man.

OTHER MEASURES ADOPTED.

This Conference advanced the preachers allowance from sixty-four to eighty dollars per year; recommended the supply of parsonages and heavy furniture; rescinded the rule requiring the preachers to give an account of their presents; required preachers to travel four years in order to be members of the General Conference; authorized the ordination of African preachers to deacons orders; fixed the boundaries of seven annual conferences, including the

New England, which it created out of territory before covered by the New York Conference.

REMARKABLE SUCCESS REALIZED.

At the close of the General Conference every man went to his work in improved confidence, and God poured out his spirit in a wonderful manner. New and mighty men were brought into the field; camp-meetings were pressed, especially in the West, with William M'Kendree, like a flame of fire, leading the hosts. Strange and convincing results, similar to those which occurred in the great revival under President Edwards, sixty years before, appeared on every side, and many were converted. The net increase in the three years following was 761 traveling preachers, and 39,176 members, which was more than 136 members to each of the 287 ministers in the field in 1800, and equal to an increase, with our present number of ministers, to nearly *one million and a half* of members in the same length of time.

New Hampshire and Vermont shared largely in the work, as did Canada. O'Kelley's pestiferous influence had begun to wane in the South, and order and revivals succeeded as in other days.

THE BEGINNING OF PRO-SLAVERY MOBS.

This year, however, commenced a series of troubles with slavery, from which the Church and the country have not yet fully recovered, in the shape of a pro-slavery mob. John Harper, who was stationed at Charleston, South Carolina, received some pamphlets from the North, proposing to memorialize the legislature against slavery, and burned

them. But the people having heard about them, a mob gathered; and, failing to find him, seized his colleague, George Dougherty, took him to a street-pump, and would probably have drowned him, but for the intervention of a pious woman by the name of Kingsley, who placed herself between the minister and mob, and stuffed her shawl into the spout and stopped the water. Seeing her intrepidity, a gentleman stepped forward, sword in hand, and led him away, no one daring to interfere. He, however, died from the wetting and exposure; and his persecutors seemed to fall under the curse of God; but their miserable deaths did not prevent the repetition of these transactions afterward in the same city.

PATIENCE AND FORBEARANCE TRIUMPHANT.

There was, also, a little trouble in Philadelphia; leading to the withdrawal of several members, who started what was called the "*Academy Station*." It would hardly be worth naming, but for the *kind* spirit with which they were treated by the authorities and the result. Having had their way for a few years, and been tenderly indulged, they dropped into line, and the matter ended without a rupture. A noble example of Christian forbearance worthy of imitation.

The reader who remembers our notice of Lee's efforts to organize a society in Boston will be interested to know that, after all his failures, the New England Conference, consisting of thirty-five preachers, met there in 1803, representing 2,941 members; and, what was of no little importance, were affiliated with a growing American Church of 104,070 members,

whose officers were traversing the continent. It is a great thing for a Church, as well as an individual, to have strong and influential relations. A little society in Boston, therefore, meant something, like a little cutter flying the American flag in foreign waters. It would be easy, perhaps, to destroy either, but that would only insure the coming of something larger and more commanding. Methodism in Boston was too poor to build a church; but what was that, so long as it had so many generous friends in New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore? The unity of Methodism is one of its chief elements of strength. Separatists have not always thought of this in leaving the old Church, and setting up for themselves.

CHAPTER V

OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1804—FANATICISM AMONG PRESBYTERIANS—DEATH OF BISHOP WHATCOAT—GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1808—DELEGATED GENERAL CONFERENCE PROVIDED FOR—ITS FIRST SESSION—DEATH OF BISHOP ASBURY—METHODISM ASSAILED—GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1816—NEW BISHOPS.

THE General Conference for 1804 convened in Baltimore, and consisted of one hundred and seven members, Bishops Coke, Asbury, and Whatcoat, presiding. So careful were the preachers of the principles and economy of the Church that they agreed, at the outset, that no *old* rule should be altered without the concurrence of two-thirds of the members, though they failed to require the same majority for the enactment of a new rule. It was here agreed, too, that the bishops should fix the times of holding the annual conferences, and ordered that they should not allow a preacher to remain more than two years successively in any circuit or station. Also, that the Book Concern should be transferred from Philadelphia to New York; and that the articles of religion should be altered by the exclusion of the words "Act of Confederation," and the insertion of the words "Constitution of the United States," which had become the supreme law of the country. Here, too, the boundaries of the conferences were first inserted in the Discipline, though not

with very great precision. With some few other enactments, the conference adjourned May 23d, in great peace and with renewed ardor.

FANATICISM AMONG PRESBYTERIANS.

We have before hinted at the part certain Presbyterians took in the first camp-meetings. It was not reasonable to believe that the measure would be approved by the ruling authorities of that Church, and it was not. After considerable wrangling the offenders separated from their old associates, and organized what they called the "Springfield Presbytery," and undertook to imitate the Methodists, but did not surround themselves with those guards which are necessary to the preservation of orthodoxy, harmony, and order. Some of their new preachers, having little knowledge or experience, were puffed up by their sudden elevation to orders, and, being without proper leaders, soon threw off all restraint and plunged into various heresies and practical irregularities, which disgraced themselves and their cause. After jumping, dancing, jerking, barking, and rolling on the ground, under pretense of religious devotion, they scattered off among the Shakers and into the world, and the "Springfield Presbytery" was dissolved. This agitation led to other differences among the Presbyterians, some eschewing Calvinism, as well as the extravagances before named, but holding to revivals, as the more rigid brethren did not. At length, they, too, separated from their old associates, and organized a Church of their own in 1810, called "The Cumberland Presbytery," which still survives, with more or less success.

The Methodists, during these outbursts of fanaticism, were in great danger, but escaped serious disaster by reason of their thorough organism and wise leaders. Camp-meetings lost caste in Kentucky, but they were pushed with great vigor in other parts, and accomplished much good.

DEATH OF BISHOP WHATCOAT.

Nothing more occurred of noticeable importance during the time under consideration, beyond the ordinary routine of hard work and continued success, except the death of Bishop Whatcoat, which occurred in Delaware, July 5, 1806, in the triumphs of the faith he had preached to others. He was born in England in the year 1736. At the age of twenty-two he was born of the Spirit. Eleven years after, he entered the itinerant work as a preacher under Mr. Wesley, who ordained him elder in 1784,*and sent him to America. He was an excellent man, full of faith and the Holy Ghost; did his work well in every position he occupied, was generally beloved, and departed this life joyfully in the seventy-first year of his age.

Bishop Asbury said of him, in preaching his funeral sermon, "I have known Richard Whatcoat from the time I was fourteen years of age most intimately, and have tried him most accurately in respect to the soundness of his faith. I have also known his manner of life at all times and places before the people; his long suffering, for he was a man of great affliction, having been exercised with severe diseases and great labors," yet "he always exemplified the tempers and conduct of a most devoted servant

of God and Christian minister." Sanctification was his favorite theme, and few men exemplified it more beautifully.

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1808.

The meeting of this body was anticipated with considerable solicitude on several accounts. Dr. Coke was in Europe by permission, Bishop Whatcoat was dead, and Bishop Asbury was getting old and infirm, so that arrangements must be made for new leaders. Besides, it had come to be known that Dr. Coke wrote a letter to Bishop White in 1791, indicating a desire to have the Methodist Episcopal Church wedded in some prudent way to the Protestant Episcopal Church, which was not very pleasing to the delegates or their constituents. The matter was, however, carefully considered by the conference, and the name of Dr. Coke was allowed to be published in the minutes, as usual, and he permitted to remain in Europe until the conference should call him back. This satisfied all parties tolerably well.

PROVIDENTIAL DELIVERANCE.

Looking at the matter now, we think it fortunate for the Church that this course was taken, all things considered. Dr. Coke had justly occupied a very high position in this country, and was growing in influence all the time he held the office of superintendent, and remained in America. Finding that the work was too much for one man, and apprehending differences in judgment with associates who might be elected to co-operate with him, he proposed to have the continent equally divided between him and Mr.

Asbury as superintending bishops. Under the circumstances of his absence and his letter to Bishop White, this proposition received little favor. Had he not written the letter, and had he remained in the country, growing in influence as he had done, it is not impossible that it would have carried. How it would have worked, we can not tell; but in view of the success which has crowned the old policy of equal general superintendency, it seems as if it must have blocked the wheels of progress, and led to less gratifying results than now appear. At all events, apparent mistakes do often turn for the furtherance of the Gospel.

A DELEGATED GENERAL CONFERENCE PROVIDED FOR.

We have already referred to the difficulty of making authoritative rules for the Church, scattered as the preachers were from Maine to Georgia. This conference received a memorial from the New York Conference, indorsed by several others, asking that provision should be made for a *delegated* General Conference. It being referred to a committee of two from each of the *seven* conferences then present, the committee reported substantially the plan now in use, providing that the said delegated conference should not do certain things, stated in what are known among us as "The Restrictive Rules." (See Dis., ¶¶ 93-99.)

The report was at first rejected by a majority of seven, much to the regret of the older preachers, especially Mr. Asbury. *They* saw the necessity of protecting the doctrines, general rules, and government of the Church against the hurried vote of a

bare majority. After considerable consultation, the matter was reconsidered, and the report adopted with great unanimity.

Before this, each General Conference was at liberty to make whatever alterations it might see fit, or to introduce any new doctrine. Knowing the rage of men for novelty and the recklessness of excitement, Mr. Asbury desired to see the foundations of Methodism well secured before he should be taken away.

It is impossible to appreciate all the good results that have flowed to the Church and the world from this wise arrangement. The General Conference has since been to the Church what Congress and the Supreme Court are to the State. If it shall continue to exercise its authority with discretion, and with proper zeal for God and the best good of men, its Gospel agencies will yet encompass the earth.

THE QUESTION OF MORE BISHOPS, ETC.

Mr. Asbury being left alone in the superintendency, the question of more bishops was one of special interest, and, as usual, elicited many opinions. Able men were in favor of electing *seven*—one for each conference—and thus largely superseding the necessity of presiding elders. A motion for two was rejected, and *one* was preferred, almost unanimously; whereupon, William M'Kendree was elected, and duly consecrated. He was born in Virginia, July 6, 1757, educated in the English Church, converted in 1787, and received into the conference on trial the next year. But he became so perplexed with the O'Kelly strife that he desisted from traveling until 1793, when he was stationed at Norfolk, and after-

ward made presiding elder. He was evidently a man of great power, and longed to save sinners. This was the secret of his remarkable success—and a very desirable qualification for a bishop.

This conference provided also for the ordination of local preachers, and made some other prudential arrangements, all of which seemed to give general satisfaction.

Bishop M'Kendree entered upon his new duties with his old zeal, making the entire circuit of the continent from year to year. He believed, with Mr. Asbury, that he ought to "visit every part of the work, because the preachers and people ought to know their bishop, and that he ought to know them, so as to sympathize with them in their wants and sufferings, to understand their true state, as well as to set an example to all which they may safely and profitably imitate;" and, to accomplish this, he had to adopt his senior's economy of time, and make the most of "a short day by only stopping to feed the horses, and let the riders, meanwhile, take a bite of what they may have been provident enough to put into their pockets."

He traveled much, the first year, with Mr. Asbury, from whose journal we catch a glimpse of the honors and work of the office, written while they were resting a little in Tennessee. It reads thus: "My flesh sinks under labor. We are riding in a poor thirty-dollar chaise, in partnership, two bishops of us, but it must be confessed that it tallies well with the weight of our purses. What bishops! Well, but we have great news, and we have great times, and each Western, Southern, and the Virginia

Conference will have one thousand souls truly converted to God. Is not this an equivalent for a light purse, and are we not well paid for starving and toil? Yes, glory to God!" This can be better appreciated if we remember that their salaries were eighty dollars a year each, if they could raise it, besides their traveling expenses.

A SPECIMEN OF CONVERSION.

The Word in those days was with power. A Mr. Kenton, who was one of the first to venture into the wilderness of Kentucky and Ohio, and had suffered much in his conflicts with Indians, having been taken prisoner once or twice, and run great hazards in hunting wild beasts that roamed the forests, at last encountered a camp-meeting, and was arrested and tamed by the Gospel. In opening his mind to Rev. Mr. Sale, he enjoined the utmost secrecy, and then gave an outline of his strange life. In the course of the night, the heavenly light broke in upon his soul, so that the next morning he went forth proclaiming what God had done for his soul. His conversion made a powerful impression on others, who concluded that a religion which could transform the hero of so many battles must come from God.

THE WORK IN THE EAST.

While these successes were being achieved in the South and West, Rev. Messrs. Elijah Hedding, Joshua Soule, Thomas Branch, John Brodhead, Elijah R. Sabin, Oliver Beale, and George Pickering, all, but the last named, presiding elders, were push-

ing the work in the New England Conference with considerable effect. Many were converted and joined the Church, notwithstanding the prevailing prejudices against our doctrines and methods.

Camp-meetings were held all over the country, and were attended with great power. Such was the progress of the work that in 1810 the bishops organized the Genesee Conference, for the benefit of Western New York and the Canadas. The same year, the Western Conference was held at Cincinnati, Ohio, then a little village of eleven years' growth, and was comforted to find an increase of about four thousand members.

THE FIRST DELEGATED CONFERENCE.

This conference opened in the city of New York, May 1, 1812, and was composed of the following delegates:

New York Conference.—Freeborn Garrettson, Daniel Ostrander, Aaron Hunt, William Phœbus, William Anson, Nathan Bangs, Laban Clark, Truman Bishop, Eben Smith, Henry Stead, Billy Hibbard, Seth Crowell, and Samuel Merwin.

New England Conference.—George Pickering, Oliver Beale, Elijah Hedding, Joshua Soule, William Stevens, Asa Kent, Solomon Sias, Joel Winch, and Daniel Webb.

Genesee Conference.—William B. Lacy, Anning Owen, Timothy Lee, Jonas Kelsey, Elijah Batchelor, and William Snow.

Western Conference.—Learner Blackman, Benjamin Lakin, James Quinn, Frederick Stier, John Sale, William Pattison, Isaac Quinn, William Houston,

John Collins, Samuel Parker, James Axley, David Young, and Thomas Stillwell.

South Carolina Conference.—Lewis Myers, Lovick Pierce, Joseph Tarpley, Daniel Asbury, William M. Kennedy, Samuel Dunwody, James E. Glenn, Hilliard Judge, and Joseph Travis.

Virginia Conference.—Jesse Lee, Philip Bruce, John Buxton, Thomas L. Douglas, John Ballew, James M. Boyd, Richard Lattimore, Charles Callaway, Cannellum H. Hines, William Jean, and John Early.

Baltimore Conference.—Nelson Reed, Joseph Toy, Joshua Wells, Nicholas Snethen, Enoch George, Asa Shinn, Hamilton Jefferson, Jacob Gruber, Robert R. Roberts, William Ryland, Christopher Frye, James Smith, Robert Burch, Henry Smith, and Andrew Hemphill.

Philadelphia Conference.—Ezekiel Cooper, John M'Claskey, Thomas F. Sargent, Stephen G. Roszel, Thomas Ware, Richard Sneath, Thomas Boring, David Bartine, John Walker, George Woolley, James Bateman, Thomas Burch, Michael Coate, and Asa Smith. (Bangs's History, Vol. II, pp. 305-307.)

Bishops Asbury and M'Kendree presided. "Jefferson's Manual" of parliamentary rules was temporarily adopted for the guidance of the business. Bishop Asbury indicated a disposition to visit his native land, having been absent from it *forty-one years*; but the committee, after due deliberation, reported: "It is our sincere desire and request that Bishop Asbury would relinquish his thought of visiting Europe, and confine his labors to the American connection so long as God may preserve his life."

In this the conference heartily concurred, and the bishop continued in the work.

But the bishops were carefully watched, lest they should exceed their Disciplinary prerogatives. Some claimed that they had no authority for organizing the Genesee Conference as they had done; but the conference approved the measure, and thus they escaped rebuke. They were, however, placed under special restrictions with regard to similar operations in the future.

OF ORDAINING LOCAL PREACHERS.

The proposition to make local deacons eligible to elders' orders elicited a very long and able discussion; but it was finally indorsed, on the ground of expediency, where their services as elders *might be needed*, and could therefore be employed to good purpose.

MORE ACTIVITY IN THE BOOK CONCERN.

As before stated, *The Methodist Magazine* was started in 1789, but it was suspended the year following. Many of the leading members of this conference urged the necessity of a periodical of some sort with much emphasis. Some were strongly opposed to it; but the conference voted, by a bare majority, directing the agents to resume the publication of the magazine, commencing the third volume at furthest by January next, and, to insure the work, appointed Thomas Ware assistant agent to Daniel Hitt. This is the first we hear of *two* agents; but the magazine was not resumed as ordered, nor until 1818, which explains the great scarcity of material for the history of the Church during the long interval of its suspension.

“For a number of years,” says Dr. Bangs, “it appeared that education of all sorts, as well as writing for the public eye, was laid aside as useless, and we seem to have come to the strange conclusion that we had naught else to do but simply to preach the Gospel.

It is true that a few sighed over this state of things. It was this feeling which prompted them to bring the subject before the General Conference of 1812.

“From these humiliating facts it became proverbial that the Methodists were enemies to learning.

The fact is, the destruction of Cokesbury College, and the failure to establish district schools and academies, threw a damper upon the spirits of those who had abetted learning, and furnished those who were indifferent to its interests with arguments against it.”

Though it was *twenty-three* years since the book business was commenced, it was by no means large. Mr. Crowther, in his “Portraiture of Methodism,” published in 1813, gives the list of all books on sale, together with those published by the concern, numbering in all only *twenty-nine* volumes, a complete set of which (excepting “Coke’s Commentary,” which was imported) could be bought for \$31.64. And there were among them but *three* American publications. If this statement is correct, the Church certainly was not very deeply affected at that time, with the importance of the press to her noble enterprise.

OTHER MATTERS ABOUT THIS CONFERENCE.

It was here that the Episcopal practice of addressing the General Conference was introduced. Bishop

M'Kendree read an address of his own, and Bishop Asbury then extemporized one. Both were heard with respect and properly referred to a committee.

This conference also restricted the power of the preachers a little with regard to the appointment of stewards, and allowed them only to nominate, where they had before appointed them. It authorized annual conferences, too, to raise funds to support their superannuated preachers, widows, and orphans.

INTERRUPTION BY THE WAR OF 1812.

We have now reached another important period in the history of the country and the Church. June 18, 1812, the United States declared war against great Great Britain; which created a profound sensation all over the continent. The preachers appointed to Canada were unable to go to their work, and the Canada preachers were prevented from attending their conference, and all friendly intercourse between the two countries was suspended. The work, however, advanced in the States. The reports for 1813 showed a handsome increase; but the effects of the war, which still raged, appeared the next year, indicating some loss. The burning of Washington and the attack upon Baltimore absorbed all hearts, and the war-whoop largely took the place of religious enterprise.

OF THE REFORMED METHODISTS.

Among the locations of 1813 we find the name Pliny Brett, who failed to be admitted to the New England Conference in full connection as he anticipated. This so offended him that he soon after

withdrew from the Church, and placed himself at the head of a party which pretended to peculiar attainments in holiness, and went about to infect others with his own prejudices, and combine them in a new organization. The project succeeded so far as to alienate and draw off several local preachers and a considerable number of members, who assumed the name of "Reformed Methodists," indicating the conviction entertained by them that the Church had backslidden from original Methodism and from God. With this specious title they went forth berating their old friends, and calling upon all who loved the power of religion to rally to the new standard. Ranters and fanatics who wanted more liberty than propriety would justify, or the leaders could tolerate, heeded the call and withdrew. Several societies on Cape Cod and in Vermont were greatly agitated, and several smaller ones were destroyed, by which means the Church lost some worthy members, and contracted a prejudice against holiness, which was the battle-cry of the seceding party. They were generally sincere, we think, but ignorant, conceited, uncharitable, and censorious, in the erroneous belief that they were divinely inspired, and, therefore, ought to follow their impressions at whatever cost. They lacked the charity that "suffereth long and is kind, that vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, is not easily provoked, and thinketh no evil."

Having spent their first peculiar love in scattering the old Church, an object in which they were particularly united, they fell upon each other. Some were disgusted and returned to their old friends, while

others held together in some sort (never numbering over two thousand), until 1843, when they affiliated with the Wesleyans organized under the leadership of Rev. Orange Scott, whose history will be noticed in its chronological order.

Holiness has had a great deal to endure from its professed friends. If it were not of God it would have been utterly discarded long ago. But it is evidently gaining ground, though still in danger of suffering from fanaticism. It probably never had so many consistent admirers as at present, and the number seems to be increasing.

THE AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

This was organized at Philadelphia in the year 1816, under the leadership of Richard Allen, a local elder, the first colored preacher ordained in the country. He was a man of excellent character, of wealth and influence, but separated from the Church in consequence of local difficulties between the two races.

A considerable number of others followed his example, and united to form an independent Church under the above title. They made no change in doctrine, nor even in discipline, further than to accommodate their new circumstances. The object of the movement was to govern themselves, and not be subject to a government in which they had no part on account of their color. At their first conference, Allen was elected bishop, and ordained by the imposition of hands, since which, others have been inducted into the same office. They hold annual and general conferences, and maintain a system of itinerancy with considerable success. They claim

600 traveling preachers, 1,300 local preachers, and 200,000 members.

These transactions created some excitement among the colored people in the City of New York, and they declared for independence. But not having all confidence in Allen, or his new scheme, they struck out a little different plan, and organized another "African Methodist Episcopal Zion's Church," to be governed by elders of their own choosing, one of whom was to be annually elected to superintend, but not to be set apart by the usual forms of ordination. They now claim to number about 694 ministers and 164,000 Church members in the United States and Canada.

In this day of fraternity it is to be hoped that those two bodies may find it for their interest to come together. They have done good, and are growing, but, if they can agree, may do better combined into one strong Church.

OF THE STILLWELLITES.

The year following, New York experienced another slight explosion. In rebuilding John-street church the trustees and other members fell into some differences. A part, perhaps, wished to have the finishing a little nicer than the others fancied, or could conscientiously approve. One thing led to another, till the contest became very sharp, and resulted in the secession of William M. Stillwell, a traveling preacher, three trustees, and about three hundred members of the Church. The disaffection was communicated to several local preachers and others in the vicinity, and *Stillwellites* multiplied for a time

with considerable rapidity. But a second sober thought turned the tables again, and most of the seceders returned from whence they went out, more than ever convinced that it is easier to destroy a good Church than to establish a better one. Those who remained soon laid aside all pretensions to itinerancy, and settled down on the Congregational plan, with the father of the movement for their pastor, who died after several years, regretting his course.

"We mention this case to show how easy it is to make a division in the Church of God, and how little it avails, compared with the expectations of its promoters. It was, no doubt, believed in this case, that the secession would shake the Church to its foundations, and bring about a glorious state of things, in which the seceders would be eminently popular. But how disappointed! It was only as a pebble falling into the ocean. You hear the sound thereof, and mark a circular ripple upon the wave, and pass along as though nothing had happened. The Methodist Church is not to be overturned so easily. But such beacons of warning are of little use, after all. Adventurers will not learn by the experience of others. They are wiser, or their idol scheme has some advantage that insures its success. So on they go to the same oblivion that covers their predecessors, the wreck of whose darling visions should have deterred them from such presumption. Still, it is our duty to admonish them of their danger.

THE DEATH OF DR. COKE.

Bishop Whatcoat had gone to his reward. Asbury was fast finishing his course, when the news

arrived that Dr. Coke was found dead in his cabin, May 3, 1814, on his way to India with several missionaries to lay the foundations of a Christian Church in that far off land. Though he had been released some six years from his obligations to the American conference, he was still held in high esteem for the noble work he had done, and his death was a source of deep affliction. He had made arrangements for his burial at home, but it being impossible to preserve his remains, he was buried in the ocean, fitly says one writer, as he belonged to no country but to the whole world. He had crossed the Atlantic eighteen times in the interest of religion, repeatedly visited Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, and the West Indies, at his own expense, and had now completed his long and useful life, probably by apoplexy, in the sixty-seventh year of his age. He was called of God to a great work, and he did it. He organized the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1784 with 83 preachers, and 14,988 members; and left it at his death, with 729 preachers, and 211,129 members. "Well done, good and faithful servant."

ANOTHER PRINCE FALLEN.

Bishop Asbury, full of faith and hope, vibrating between two worlds, desired to visit Mississippi, lying south of the ten conferences under his supervision, but he was not able. December 2, 1816, he wrote in his journal: "My consolations are great. I live in God moment by moment." The following March he visited Richmond, Virginia, and preached his last sermon sitting, being unable to walk or even stand. March 31st, nearing his end, he was asked

if he felt the Lord Jesus precious, when, with great effort, he raised both hands in token of victory, and passed away, in the seventy-first year of his age.

When he came to New York, forty-five years before, the Methodist connection numbered about six hundred members. After battling with the winds and storms for nearly half a century, he bade a peaceful adieu to the Church he had loved and cherished as a mother her children, embracing six hundred and ninety-five traveling preachers, and two hundred and fourteen thousand, two hundred and thirty-five members. But these statistics convey only a faint idea of what was accomplished during the period named. To estimate this properly, we must consider how many were converted and taken to Abraham's bosom; how many joined other Churches; how many more were improved and made happier and better in various respects; and how much was accomplished in extending the itinerant plan through the States and territories. A foundation was laid by his labors upon which others have built so nobly since, and without which they must have achieved much less.

Mr. Asbury lived a bachelor and devoted his whole life to God and the Church. When near his end, he made his will, and gave the Book Concern what was left of about two thousand dollars some childless friend had devised to him, saying, "Let it return and continue to aid the cause of piety." His remains were buried in Spottsylvania, but at the request of brethren in Baltimore, and by order of the General Conference, they were removed to that city, and deposited in a vault prepared for the

purpose under the pulpit of the Eutaw-street Church, where a marble slab marks his resting place, and furnishes a brief outline of his history. It is calculated that during his forty-five years of ministerial service in this country he traveled about 6,000 miles a year, making a grand total of 270,000 miles, and that he preached over 17,000 sermons, and ordained over 3,000 ministers. It will be difficult to find another man who worked so hard or did so much or at so little cost to others.

In looking over the four years immediately following the decease of this patriarch of Methodism, it is delightful to observe that though the Lord took away the "master builder," he did not suffer the work to cease. Indeed, death was not permitted to touch him till others had been raised up with hearts and heads to take the cause where he left it, and carry it forward toward its grand destination. The net increase was 45,655 members and 201 traveling preachers.

METHODISM ASSAILED FROM ANOTHER QUARTER.

About 1810, the American Board of Commissioners began to look after the great West, and gentlemen were sent out on an exploring tour, who made a very sad report of the condition of things, implicating the Methodists in several particulars. This brought certain of the disparaged preachers to the front, who showed themselves more "competent" than they had been represented, and led to a controversy which did much good. Competence and incompetence, education and ignorance, Calvinism and Arminianism, were the principal topics, and were

all thoroughly sifted. The discussion lasted several years and revolutionized public sentiment so as to necessitate the rejection or the concealment of the "horrible decrees," in order to hold the people to their old associations, since which they have been very little preached. "Natural ability" was assumed for sinners to blunt the edge of reprobation, and justify the claims and invitations of the Gospel. But no invention has availed to save the Calvinian system.

Another good result of the controversy was the establishment of equal rights among the different sects. In the settlement of Connecticut no person was allowed to vote or hold a civil office unless he belonged to the Church. Afterward a "half-way covenant" was arranged by which outsiders—members of the Congregational society might vote and hold office, while other sects were still taxed, and deprived of these rights. Further modifications followed, but after the war of 1812, dissenters generally combined and overthrew the Charter of Charles II, and obtained a constitution, placing all denominations on an equal footing as to civil and religious liberty.

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1816.

This body convened at Baltimore. After making proper references to the loss of their senior bishop, they received and read his valedictory address in an unfinished state, indicating unabated interest in the Church he had so long and faithfully served. Taken in connection with his late conversation with Bishop M'Kendree, it shows that he had foreseen the future of the Western country, and had sketched magnificent plans for its evangelization.

Bishop M'Kendree, the only surviving superintendent of the Church, presented an address, stating the condition of the work and its necessities. A little conflict in Lower Canada, among the British and American preachers, growing out of the late war, was considered and put upon a course of amicable adjustment. Enoch George and Robert Richford Roberts were elected bishops by ballot, the former by a majority of four votes and the latter by a majority of two. Special action was had, also, looking toward the better support of the preachers, to prevent, if possible, so many locations. Joshua Soule and Thomas Mason were made book agents, and the bishops, having families to support, were thrown upon the book concern for the means. This was the first divergence from the sixth restrictive rule, which pledges the entire proceeds of the book concern to "the benefit of traveling supernumerary, superannuated, and worn-out preachers, their wives, widows, and children." At the outset, the bishops trusted to the people, in common with other preachers. In the year 1800, it was ordained by the General Conference, "Each annual conference is to pay its proportional part toward the allowance of the bishops." Four years after, this order was made to embrace "their widows and orphans."

Both the new bishops were fresh from the itinerant field. Bishop George was about *forty-nine* years of age, a Virginian by birth and education, and well trained on large circuits and districts for the higher responsibilities to which he was now called. His zeal had broken him down two or three times, so that he was obliged to locate. He was not, perhaps,

a great preacher, but still he preached mightily, and the power of God attended his word.

Mr. Roberts was a native of Maryland, eleven years younger, thoroughly converted, and similarly educated on circuits and districts. He was the first class-leader within the bounds of the present Erie Conference. "A child of the wilderness, he had been educated in its hardy habits. His rugged frame and characteristic qualities all designated him as an effective evangelist for the great West. There he had built his log cabin, and dwelt comparatively out of sight of civilized man, tilling the earth in Summer, and hunting the bear, the deer, and the raccoon in Winter. He became one of the most expert huntsmen in his day. The entire Winter had he spent in his solitary cabin, twenty miles away from any human being, and cheered only by the faithful company of his favorite sister, who prepared his repasts of wild meat. He lived a circuit preacher as he had a settler, and a bishop as he had a circuit preacher, in a log cabin, and died in a log cabin." Removing his episcopal residence to Indiana, he built him a log cabin with his own hands. "The allowance for his family expenses, besides two hundred per annum for quarterage, was, during most of his episcopal career, from two hundred to two hundred and fifty dollars per annum—at least this was the case till 1836." He was cheerful, benevolent, forbearing; an interesting preacher, not eloquent; brave, but yet diffident; the man for the times and the work he had to perform.

CHAPTER VI.

OF NEW MEASURES—DEATH OF JESSE LEE—MISSIONARY SOCIETY FORMED—GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1820—OF THE APPOINTMENT OF PRESIDING ELDERS—RELATING TO THE BRITISH CONFERENCE—OF OUR HYMN-BOOK AND CHURCHES—DISTRICT CONFERENCES—WHAT FOLLOWED 1820—GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1824 AND ITS ACTION—FOUR DAYS' MEETINGS—OTHER FIELDS OPENED—DEATH OF FREEBORN GARRETTSON.

BIDDING adieu to the General Conference of 1816, we pass along amid various scenes of activity, all well-meant, but not alike successful. The first that strikes us was the organization of the "Tract Society" of the Methodist Episcopal Church, organized by a few individuals, at New York, in 1817, with a view to supplying the poor with suitable religious reading. This furnished an easy and cheap method of reaching many people the Church had never addressed, and answered as well for defense as attack on the sins and prejudices of unbelievers. It was an old measure of Mr. Wesley, who formed the first society of the sort of which we have any record, January, 1782. The operations of this new society were limited for a number of years, but still effective. After undergoing various modifications, it settled down upon its present basis. Confining itself to the distribution of our tracts, and therefore running at slight expense,

it has done an immense amount of good with small means. Remembering that it purchases tracts at the rate of *ten to twenty* pages for a penny, the extent of its operations may be inferred from the following report of its receipts during the last few years:

Year.	Receipts.	Year.	Receipts.	Year.	Receipts.
1853	\$6,420 82*	1861	\$4,042 43	1868	\$15,012 77
1854	8,062 07	1862	4,756 82	1869	15,417 76
1855	7,681 02	1863	8,718 25	1870	16,377 96
1856	3,388 49	1864	12,610 91	1871	16,630 53
1857	5,849 26	1865	15,050 28	1872	18,990 58
1858	4,021 30	1866	14,574 24	1873	17,926 15
1859	4,148 12	1867	13,102 13	1874	16,666 15
1860	2,803 60				

In the year 1818, *The Methodist Magazine* was reissued, under the editorship of Rev Joshua Soule. This was an advance step. It opened a medium of communication with the people that had long been needed. Not less than ten thousand subscribers were obtained the first year, and the doctrines and institutions of the Church became better understood, and the people of God more established in the unity of the faith. The first number was ornamented with a steel engraving of Bishop Asbury. The work was published regularly until 1841, when it assumed the title of *Quarterly Review*, in which character it is still issued—an able and useful periodical.

About this time, too, another effort was made to promote the cause of education. The “Cokesbury College” had been twice burned, an attempt to establish district schools had failed, and the people were quite discouraged; but, in 1817, Dr. Samuel K. Jennings and some others opened a literary institution

*This does not include the receipts of the Western treasurer. Whole amount received to December 1, 1853, was not less than \$16,000.

in Baltimore, which they called "Asbury College." This, however, appeared but for a little time, and then, to the mortification of many, it vanished away. The same year an academy was established in Newmarket, New Hampshire, under the patronage of the New England Conference, and, two years after, another in the city of New York, under the patronage of the New York Conference. These were approved by the next General Conference, and other conferences were advised to establish similar institutions. The bishops were also authorized to appoint presidents, principals, or teachers to all such establishments; but this was not effected without some opposition. Though the Church owed so much to the learning of its founders, some did not realize the importance of education. This may be attributed in part to the superior success of our preachers, in the absence of literary training, over that of others who had been thoroughly prepared for the work. The academy at Newmarket was afterward transferred to Wilbraham, Massachusetts, where it has flourished ever since, and been immensely useful. The one at New York was removed to White Plains, New York, and died after a few years.

OF THE DEATH OF JESSE LEE.

This year was also marked by the death of that distinguished man of God, Jesse Lee. He was born in Virginia in 1758, converted fifteen years afterward, entered the itinerancy in 1783, and continued in it till called to his heavenly reward, when about fifty-eight years of age. His end was triumphant. "Glory! Glory! Halleluiah! Jesus reigns!" were among his

last utterances. Though he had *not* seen eye to eye with Bishop M'Kendree, and there had been considerable difference between them, he said to a mutual friend, when near his end, "Give my respects to Bishop M'Kendree, and tell him that I die in love with all the preachers; that I love him, and that he lives in my heart."

Mr. Lee was a man of sound common sense, limited education, ready wit, and indomitable perseverance. Some thought him ambitious; and he certainly was so, to do good. If he desired to be a bishop, it was pardonable in him, as he was worthy of the office, and had earned it by his heroic efforts for the cause of God, and only failed of election by *one* vote. But he was too independent and outspoken to please some who consult safety more than progress. He was a staunch advocate of the proposal to make the presiding elders elective, and some other modifications. His chief competitor for the bishopric was Mr. Whatcoat, a good, *safe* man, who lost nothing by favoring changes in the policy of the Church. Office does not always follow the highest merit, either in Church or State. But Mr. Lee did a work that entitled him to an honorable rank among his brethren in earth and heaven. He entered the ministry when the Church was small and feeble, having only 82 traveling preachers, and 13,740 members, and left it with 716 ministers, and 224,853 members. He was also the first historian of American Methodism, and recorded many important facts to enrich the pages of his successors in that line of effort. Dr. Bangs, who knew him well, says: "His personal appearance was respectable and commanding;

his countenance intelligent, and marked with that shrewdness by which he was peculiarly distinguished; and often a pleasant smile played over his lips, which gave an air of cheerfulness to his conversation.

He stands enrolled among those early Methodist preachers, who contributed by their deep piety, their sacrifices and labors, to lay the foundation of that superstructure which has since risen in such beauty and grandeur in this western world."

We might speak of another most interesting character, who died in 1816; namely, Rev George Shadford. He came out from England in 1773, influenced by Captain Webb, returned five years after, on account of the war, but subsequently came back and took his place in the itinerant ranks. He had some wonderful experiences, and achieved a vast amount of good; but our limits will not allow of further detail.

THE MISSIONARY AND BIBLE SOCIETY FORMED.

The labors of Methodists had been so emphatically missionary in their character, that little had been thought of missions as understood by others. But now that some of the societies at the great centers were getting stronger, the subject began to attract attention, which led to the organization of our Missionary and Bible Society in the City of New York, April 5, 1819. A missionary society was also formed within the bounds of the Philadelphia Conference, about the same time.

The next General Conference approved of both organizations; but, considering the Book-room was in New York, and for some other reasons, it adopted the constitution of the society located there. To

this central organization were soon added numerous auxiliaries, and the missionary spirit has continued to increase among us ever since, as will soon appear. The General Conference of 1836 recommended the dissolution of the Bible department of the society, with the view of co-operating with the American Bible Society, which was done soon after the adjournment of that body.

This brought our Church into pleasant co-operation with that noble institution. Four years after, Rev. Edmund S. Janes was appointed one of its financial secretaries. He being elected bishop in 1844, Dr. Noah Levings succeeded him in the secretaryship. At his death, Dr. Holdich was elected to the office, and still retains it. Our Church has been honorably recognized by the society in other respects, and contributes annually to its funds.

Since 1836, our missionary society has stood on its own merits. The extent of its operations may be inferred from the following exhibit of annual receipts:

RECEIPTS OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

Year	Amount.	Year	Amount.	Year	Amount.	Year	Amount.
1820	\$823 04	1834	\$35,700 15	1848	\$81,600 34	1862	\$272,523 71
1821	2,328 76	1835	30,492 21	1849	84,045 15	1863	429,768 75
1822	2,547 39	1836	59,517 16	1850	104,579 54	1864	558,993 26
1823	5,427 14	1837	57,096 05	1851	126,471 31	1865	642,740 67
1824	3,589 92	1838	96,087 36	1852	152,482 48	1866	686,380 30
1825	4,140 16	1839	132,480 29	1853	338,068 39	1867	613,020 96
1826	4,964 11	1840	136,410 87	1854	226,412 05	1868	606,661 69
1827	6,812 49	1841	139,925 76	1855	219,304 04	1869	634,704 11
1828	6,245 17	1842	139,473 25	1856	238,441 92	1870	602,951 27
1829	14,176 11	1843	144,770 80	1857	272,190 48	1871	629,921 75
1830	13,158 63	1844	146,578 78	1858	258,224 61	1872	673,756 60
1831	9,950 57	1845	94,562 27	1859	270,667 19	1873	689,736 64
1832	11,379 66	1846	89,528 26	1860	262,722 77	1874	675,080 32
1833	17,097 05	1847	78,932 73	1861	250,374 93		

How and where these funds have been expended, will appear hereafter.

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1820.

This body convened in Baltimore on the first day of May, as usual, and was composed of eighty-nine delegates, a small assembly compared with that which assembled in Brooklyn, New York, in 1872, consisting of four hundred and twenty-one delegates. Bishops M'Kendree, George, and Roberts, presided. Their administration was approved, and Bishop M'Kendree, then very feeble in health, was affectionately excused from any further episcopal service than he might feel able and inclined to perform, and provision was made for his support.

OF THE APPOINTMENT OF PRESIDING ELDERS.

This conference was distinguished by the adoption of a new rule with regard to the power of the bishops. The history of episcopacy, not our own, was calculated to create suspicion, and suggest caution. The first twelve elders ordained were necessarily presiding elders, their ordination being particularly designed to furnish the people with the sacraments. To meet this demand, they had to sweep over a wider field than was even then embraced in a single circuit. (See Emory's *Hist. Dis.*, p. 129.) This suggested their importance in other respects, particularly in supervising and extending the work, in connection with the bishops. In 1792, the General Conference constituted them a distinct class of elders, and defined their duties, ordaining that they should be chosen by the bishop presiding. This, of course, gave the

bishops great power. Though they had no vote in any conference, annual or general, having the appointment of the presiding elders, who exercise all their great authority in their absence, save that of ordaining, they could easily secure the election of ministers to the General Conferences of their own way of thinking on most subjects. What then seemed probable has since become history. Every General Conference has been largely composed of presiding elders.

But there was a feeling in some leading minds in 1820 that our government gave too much power to the bishops. The preachers had cheerfully submitted to Mr. Wesley and taken their appointments from his assistants, and the bishops who had succeeded to his jurisdiction; but now that the Church had come to number about one thousand traveling preachers, many of whom were the equals of the bishops in talents and admiration of Methodism, they thought it would be better to relieve the bishops of a part of their responsibility, and give it to the conferences. And particularly so, as the sovereignty of the bishops over the appointments had been a continual source of irritation from the beginning. Rev James O'Kelly was lost to the Church by it in 1792, with many others. Dr. Coke had proposed relief twenty years before, which failed, no doubt, purely by reason of the high respect entertained for Bishop Asbury. In 1808, a motion was made in the General Conference to make the office of presiding elder elective by the votes of the annual conferences, and fifty-two voted for it, but seventy-three against it. A similar motion was made in 1812, and lost by only three votes. It failed again in 1816, though one of the bishops favored

it. Four years after, a similar proposition was presented and lost, creating considerable uneasiness, when Dr. Bangs moved the reference of the subject to a committee of three on each side, to confer with the bishops and report what alterations, if any, might be made to conciliate the wishes of the brethren. This prevailed, and Ezekiel Cooper, Stephen G. Roszel, Nathan Bangs, Joshua Wells, John Emory, and William Capers were appointed. After proper consultation with the bishops the committee unanimously reported, May 20th, to be inserted in the Discipline:

“1. That whenever, in any annual conference, there shall be a vacancy or vacancies in the office of presiding elder, in consequence of his period of service of four years having expired, or the bishop wishing to remove a presiding elder, or by death, resignation, or otherwise, the bishop or president of the conference having ascertained the number wanted from any of these causes, shall nominate three times the number, out of which the conference shall elect by ballot, without debate, the number wanted; provided, when there is more than one wanted, not more than three at a time shall be nominated, nor more than one at a time elected; provided, also, that in case of any vacancy or vacancies in the office of presiding elder in the interval of an annual conference, the bishop shall have authority to fill the said vacancy or vacancies, until the ensuing annual conference.

“2. That the presiding elders be and hereby are made the advisory council of the bishop or president of the conference in stationing the preachers.”

(Bangs's History, Vol. II, pp. 335-347, General Conference Journal for 1820.)

After some conversation, the report was adopted, sixty-one voting for it, and twenty-five against it, seeming to settle the vexed question forever. But it did not. Rev. Joshua Soule, who had been elected bishop seven days before, but not consecrated, entertaining high Episcopal opinions, informed the conference that this action was unconstitutional, and he could not consistently with his views, be controlled by it. Bishop M'Kendree entertained similar views, and thought the measure subversive of the itinerancy. This brought up the subject again, in motions, counter motions, and debates, whereupon Mr. Soule resigned; but a majority stood by their action, and accepted his resignation. But in view of the solicitude of Bishop M'Kendree, and other eminent men, the new rule in relation to presiding elders was suspended for four years. In 1824, it was again suspended till 1828, when, amid the storm of radicalism that howled over the Middle States, threatening to sweep away the very foundations of the Church, it was rescinded, since which no serious effort has been made to revive the subject, except by secessionary factions who have uniformly centered around this, as the most vulnerable point in Methodism.

OUR RELATIONS TO THE BRITISH CONFERENCE.

As before stated, the two wars with England in 1776 and 1812 greatly disturbed the pleasant relations of the two bodies separated by the Atlantic Ocean more than by any difference of sentiment or purpose. The last had created no little conflict

between our preachers in Canada and the English missionaries, particularly in the Eastern District. This led to considerable correspondence. It was, however, conducted in an excellent spirit, all parties seeming determined not to contend, nor suffer their feelings to be agitated, or their friendly relations to be broken up. In the year 1820 the General Conference appointed Mr. John Emory a delegate to the British Conference, and adopted an address to that body, proposing a division of territory as the best method of bringing the question of difference to a settlement. The proposition was duly considered, and acceded to, by which Lower Canada became connected with the English Conference, and Upper Canada retained its former connection with us; each body withdrawing all its preachers from the other's ground, and agreeing in no way to interfere therewith; an example of urbanity and prudent management seldom, if ever, set before by two great denominations of Christians. We mention this to show how our Church became disconnected with a portion of territory upon which she bestowed early attention, and in which she achieved magnificent results; and will only add, that there has been no revival of the difficulty since.

This was not the only advantage of the measure. Mr. Emory bore a fraternal letter to the British Conference proposing an interchange of delegates with that body, which was cordially accepted. Though our modes of procedure differ in some respects, we are one in name, spirit, and purpose, and find no difficulty in affiliating as we happen to come within each other's lines. And if we mistake not the signs of

the times, this good example is being imitated by the younger and smaller bodies of Methodists, and, indeed, by all Christian denominations.

ORIGIN OF OUR HYMN-BOOK.

As our Hymn-book is being considerably criticised, and seems to be approaching another revision, it may be interesting to the young reader to glance at its early history. The first collection in use in this country was prepared and printed by Mr. Wesley, and was entitled, "A collection of Psalms and Hymns for the Lord's day." It was printed in 1784. We are not informed whether it underwent any essential change till the time of which we are speaking, but presume it did not, as there was little enterprise in the Book Concern in those days. But the General Conference of 1820 adopted a revision made by the Book Committee, and ordered it to be printed. That edition was afterward altered by affixing the names of the tunes to the hymns, and in 1836 a supplement was added. Thus it remained till superseded by another revision, ordered by the General Conference of 1848. Imperfect as any of these revisions were, they had the merit of being our standard Hymn-book, and were current in all our Churches. The poorest of them is better than the trash that is now being forced into our pulpits by private enterprise. Every minister who preaches to secure a specific result, will try to select lessons and hymns that have a tendency to produce it. But if he is to be presented with a different hymn-book in every pulpit that he may visit, he must be embarrassed. We have lately encountered half a dozen strange substi-

tutes for our standard collection, in which, for want of time, perhaps, we failed to find any thing appropriate, one of them containing less than *seventy* hymns, all told, and that in a splendid church.

The General Conference of 1820 also provided for the publication of a tune-book, adapted to our wants. This continued in use till 1832, when it was revised and republished. Four years after, arrangements were made for an improved edition, which was in use for several years, when others were issued, of which we need not speak.

OF FREE AND PEWED CHURCHES.

Up to this time, most of our houses of worship were free. The difficulty of erecting churches on this principle, however, had become quite obvious in many places, and some had adopted the pew system. This gave considerable alarm, and the General Conference took decided ground on the subject. But its action had little effect. The *people* in certain sections found free houses utterly impracticable, without encumbering themselves with unmanageable debts, and therefore took the responsibility of erecting pewed houses, as their English brethren did before Mr. Wesley's death, and have ever done since. (See Dr. Dixon's remarks before the General Conference of 1848.) This was always a little afflictive to the South and West; but they endured it as a less evil than no churches at all, which was the other alternative in many places. Had there been no restriction of this kind, it is believed we should have had more and better churches, with less debts; perhaps not. But now, if enough desire a pewed house in any part

of the country, to build one, and maintain public worship therein in a peaceable and brotherly way, they will be treated in a kind and conciliatory spirit by *any* conference in the connection, however strongly biased in favor of free churches. In essential things, Methodists plead for *unity*; in *non*-essentials, for *liberty*; and in all things for *charity*. If we mistake not, however, the tendency is in favor of free churches. As liberality and the desire for the salvation of the masses increases, free churches will become more common. At all events, many old aristocratic pews are now wide open to all the people, inviting them to come in without money and without price.

DISTRICT CONFERENCES INTRODUCED.

There was some complaint among the local preachers about this time, because they were amenable to the quarterly conferences. They claimed the right of being tried by their peers. To quiet any uneasiness from this source, the General Conference of 1820 provided for "*District Conferences*," to be composed of all the local preachers in any one presiding elder's district who had been licensed two years. The elder of the district was to preside, or, in his absence, the conference might elect one of its own body to take his place. This new judicatory was empowered to grant and renew licenses to preach, to recommend candidates to the annual conferences for admission on trial, and for orders; and to try, suspend, expel, or acquit, such local preachers as might be accused; but they could license no one to preach unless he was recommended for that office by the quarterly conference of his circuit. But this arrangement did not

work as was hoped. Many of the most useful of the local preachers disapproved of it, and would not take the trouble to attend the conferences; while those who needed restraint, rather than *more* liberty, made these meetings the occasion of considerable mischief. The result was, their powers were restricted from time to time, and restored to the quarterly conference; and in 1836 the district conferences were disbanded, to await another experiment, which will be noticed in its chronological order.

OF NEW CHURCHES.

This conference took very strong ground with regard to new places of worship, requiring that they should be firmly secured to the Church by our deed of settlement. And, to avoid embarrassing debts, it forbade the commencement of any new one until *three-fourths* of the amount necessary to complete it should be subscribed, a rule which has operated, perhaps, to restrain extravagant enterprises; but, like that which required "churches to be built plain and decent, with *free* seats," has been largely disregarded. Our departures from these rules have occasioned no little trouble, but, on the whole, have probably contributed to the furtherance of the Gospel. Many have been drawn in and converted to God who would not have been reached had the Discipline been rigidly followed. But we have evidently gone to the extreme in building costly churches, and shall learn from our embarrassments to be more cautious in the future. From being too lax we became too lavish, and have a fair prospect of reaching the happy medium.

PROCEEDINGS FOLLOWING THE GENERAL CONFERENCE
OF 1820.

This body adjourned, after a most exciting and important session, with twelve annual conferences, two effective bishops, and large educational and missionary plans, to be worked out over a vast extent of country. Louisiana contained a population of 220,000 inhabitants, mostly French Roman Catholics and slaves, with only one hundred and fifty-one white, and fifty-eight colored members, in charge of one presiding elder and two preachers. The prospect was not encouraging. The Indians promised less, perhaps, but received considerable attention. They were supposed to number about 185,000 in the United States and Canada. They generally believed in the *Kesha-Muneto*—the Good Spirit; and equally in the *Manshe-Muneto*—the evil spirit, with any number of subordinate deities, called *Muneto*. Then they were divided into many tribes, each having a different language. Besides, they were greatly cursed by the whites, who cheated them, and infuriated them with bad rum. Still, our missionaries achieved much success, and their experiences and observations furnish an interesting chapter in the history of missions. About this time, the Government granted \$16,000 for the education of the Indians, a part of which went to the support of our schools among them. The origin of the work among the Wyandot Indians was remarkable. A free colored man in Virginia, by the name of Stewart, becoming converted, felt that he must go somewhere north-west in pursuit of the “lost sheep of the house of Israel.” In 1816

he started, and continued his march until he reached the Indians on the Sandusky River, where he commenced to tell the story of the cross, beginning with an old Indian woman. The next day, his congregation was enlarged by the addition of an old man. Both were soon converted. Thus, he continued his labors till a missionary was duly appointed, and the mission fell under the charge of Rev. J. B. Finley, whose connection with it is full of interest. Stewart died in the Lord among his people December 17, 1823, but his work abides. How strange are the ways of Providence!

The missionary spirit seemed to increase rapidly, and many auxiliaries were formed. Rev. J. A. Merrill was appointed a missionary within the bounds of the New England Conference, and traversed Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine, laying the foundation of many of the societies which have long appeared in the minutes. In answer to questions proposed by the society, he said: "I have visited and preached in seventy towns, traveled 3,670 miles, preached 240 sermons in about eight months." He further says, in relation to Lunenburg, Vermont: "I have attended a number of meetings in that place, and the power of God was manifested among the people. At one time the whole assembly rose and requested prayers."

Alabama was admitted as a State in 1819, and was immediately put under cultivation by the itinerants, who traversed the country. The total increase, for 1821, was 81 preachers, and 21,256 members. Rev. Fitch Reed was this year sent to York (Toronto), Canada, from which he reported 104 members the

year following. What hath God wrought in that flourishing city since!

The missionary cause and Methodism were greatly benefited by the flaming zeal and incomparable eloquence of John Summerfield, who came from Ireland, and joined the New York Conference in 1821. Vast multitudes were attracted, by his marvelous power, to hear of God and religion, who were too prejudiced to listen to ordinary men. Methodism owes much to remarkable men, thus called out in God's providence to meet emergencies. Summerfield's race was short, but it was exceedingly brilliant and effective. He died in 1826, in the twenty-eighth year of his age, and the eighth of his ministry.

In 1823, Rev. Alfred Brunson (still living, as we write) was appointed to the Detroit Circuit, Michigan, which extended four hundred miles through the country; and, with his colleague, increased the membership to 161, where now in the two conferences in that State we have 571 preachers, and 49,679 members.

Florida had been recently ceded to the United States by Spain, to compensate for damages done to her commerce. It was originally settled by Spanish Roman Catholics; but nothing daunted by this circumstance the Rev. Joshua N. Glenn was sent to St. Augustine, the oldest town in North America, and the capital of East Florida, and raised a society of fifty-two members, forty of whom were colored. Twenty-two years after, the Florida Conference reported 6,816 members, and 32 traveling preachers, all of whom went with the Church South in 1845. Let us consider the courage of the fathers in these unpromising

beginnings, and the results which have followed. They believed the Gospel, properly presented, would convert not wild Indians only, but *Catholics*.

The Rev. Jesse Walker was the same year sent out as a missionary to St. Louis, on the Mississippi, a town originally settled by French Romanists, and in a very low state of morals; but he raised a society of nearly one hundred members and built a little church. The St. Louis Conference of our Church now numbers 16,493 members, and that of the Church South, 137 preachers, and 23,800 members, to say nothing of many thousands connected with other branches of the Wesleyan family, all of which sprang from that unpromising beginning.

During the four years following the General Conference of 1820, there was much peace and prosperity. The net increase to the Church was 68,633 members, and 376 traveling preachers; making the total membership of the Church 329,795. (Bangs's History, Vol. III, pp. 102-151.)

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1824.

The General Conference of 1824 was distinguished in several respects. It was honored with the presence of Rev. Richard Reece, as a representative from the British Conference, and Rev. John Hannah, as his traveling companion. This was the first time the Church had received the Christian salutations of that body by an official representative, and this occurred in reciprocation of the regard the conference manifested for its honored matron four years before in sending Mr. Emory representative to her annual assembly. The intercourse was both pleasant and

profitable, and has since been kept up, to the credit of the parties, the honor of religion, and the unity of Methodism. Our Church has since been represented among them by Dr. William Capers, Bishop Soule, Dr. Fisk, Dr. Olin, and Bishops Simpson and Ames. In return they have sent to us Rev. William Lord, Drs. Newton, Dixon, Hannah, Thornton, and Wiseman. Distant, we hope, will be the day when any thing shall occur to disturb the fraternity of these grand old organizations. The difference between us is not essential; nothing, indeed, but what either of us could cheerfully adopt in an exchange of position. If the question should be started as to which is the most thoroughly *Wesleyan*, we, of course, would contend earnestly. In regard to free seats, organs, and some other minor matters, neither will be likely to covet investigation. As to our episcopacy and ordinations, we are just what Mr. Wesley meant we should be, all but the *name bishop*. That for prudential reasons, he did not fancy. But their ordinations are not Wesleyan in this sense. Mr. Wesley did not authorize them, though we have no doubt, if he were on earth, they would have his approval. Nor are we less defensible on other points; but it is not necessary to refer to them. We have made these allusions for the exclusive benefit of *croakers*, who sometimes complain that we have departed from Wesley.

OF LAY REPRESENTATION.

This conference received numerous memorials from laymen and local preachers, claiming the "*right*" to representation in the legislative department of the

Church. These were referred to a committee who reported it inexpedient to grant the prayer of the petitioners, with a circular to be sent to them on the subject. The report was freely discussed and adopted.

Education was treated with more zeal and determination than ever, the Augusta College having been opened the year before. It enjoys the honor of being the oldest living Methodist institution of the kind in the country. The Missionary Society made a feeble report of receipts from the beginning of \$14,716.24½, which the conference received with thanksgiving to God, saying, "We began feeble, but God has strengthened us; we began fearful, but God has encouraged and assured us."

The conference also glanced at the claims of the American Colonization Society, but hesitated to indorse them for want of information. It also gave some attention to slavery, about which its predecessors had made many rules, always denouncing it as an *evil*, but never with satisfactory results, and made arrangements to *manage* rather than extirpate it, seeming to feel that it was beyond the reach of ecclesiastical control. It elected two additional bishops, Revs. Joshua Soule and Elijah Hedding, and planted the whole board on the book concern for support. It also authorized the bishops to select a delegate to visit the Wesleyan Conference in 1826, which was not done, so that none was sent to us from that body in 1828. Finding that the circuit system did not allow of proper pastoral supervision and Sunday-school instruction in the larger towns, the bishops were requested, in effect, to restrict the circuits or supplant them by stations, which was

doubtless a step in the right direction. If the circuit system converted more, of which we are by no means certain, it did not gather into the Church and retain so many

FROM 1824 TO 1828.

Running hastily over the history of the Church from this point, we find it every-where marked with revivals and improvements. The missionary spirit was gradually advancing, and more interest was being felt in education; but the mortification of the Church in relation to education was not complete, though it was very great. In 1826, the Pittsburg Conference started another literary institution under flattering circumstances. It was denominated "Madison College," and was under the presidency of Rev. Henry B. Bascom; but it soon passed away, for the want of funds. The academy, however, established at Wilbraham the same year, under the charge of Dr. Fisk, has run a glorious race of usefulness and done the Church incalculable service. Though it has suffered severe losses by fire at different times, it is now in the height of its prosperity.

OF DENOMINATIONAL PERIODICALS.

In 1815, *The New England Missionary Magazine* was commenced at Concord, New Hampshire, edited by Rev Martin Ruter, but was suspended after a few months. In 1823, *Zion's Herald* appeared in Boston, the first weekly Methodist paper in the world, measuring *nine* by *sixteen* inches. It has exerted a powerful influence on the interests of the Church, and is likely to hold on its way to the

distant future. It was the only Church paper really open to abolitionists during the long antislavery struggle. On the 9th day of September, 1826, the *Christian Advocate* made its first appearance at the book concern in New York. Its subscription-list soon numbered *thirty thousand*, far exceeding that of every other paper in the country. It has been enlarged several times, till it has become a mammoth sheet. Its present issue is about fifty thousand copies per week.

THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION ORGANIZED.

An institution, established the year following, contemplated another necessity which it aimed to meet. We refer to the "Sunday-school Union of the Methodist Episcopal Church." The Church commenced Sabbath-school operations as early as 1790, but had always been embarrassed for the want of Bibles and other books. Measures had been adopted, several years before, with reference to these necessities, but they had not proved sufficient to their supply. The design of this institution was to afford pecuniary aid to poor schools, and, by the establishment of auxiliaries and other means, to extend and strengthen the Sabbath-school work. The society is now exercising a particular watch-care over this department of effort throughout the connection, and in raising funds and making donations to new and poor schools at home and among our missionary stations. A small collection from each of our Churches will enable the managers to do immense good, without injury to any one. It is worked with little expense, not being a publishing house, and

can, therefore, appropriate its receipts to the one object of its existence.

In tracing the history of this society, we find that at its anniversary, held May 14, 1845, there were in the Church 5,005 schools, 47,252 officers and teachers, and 263,775 scholars, and that the total receipts had been only \$685.22 in four years; and up to January 1, 1847, they were \$2,336.88. Since then they have been as follows:

Year.	Receipts.	Year.	Receipts.	Year.	Receipts.
1848	\$3,787 66	1857	\$11,268 88	1866	\$19,620 08
1849	4,058 74	1858	11,299 57	1867	
1850	5,008 60	1859	12,796 74	1868	21,286 02
1851		1860	2,007 32	1869	20,670 82
1852	7,258 09	1861	11,214 64	1870	22,406 83
1853	9,584 17	1862	9,595 89	1871	23,417 57
1854	10,170 23	1863	12,978 48	1872	22,992 88
1855	11,381 54	1864		1873	21,473 20
1856	12,316 37	1865	17,738 37	1874	20,612 17

Now (1874) we show 18,628 schools, 200,492 officers and teachers, 1,363,376 scholars, indicating a pretty large increase in twenty-nine years; and still the fields are white to the harvest.

FOUR-DAYS' MEETINGS.

The year 1827 brought out another prudential measure, which, for a time, exerted a powerful influence for good; we refer to "*four-days'*" meetings. This was not the first time that religious meetings had been extended beyond a single day. Under particular circumstances they had been continued to great lengths, and were justified only by extraordinary religious interest that pervaded the community. But these "*four days'*" meetings were instituted where

there was no interest, for the purpose of promoting a revival. They were introduced by the Rev. John Lord, of the New England Conference, in the month of September, 1827. Such were their good effects they soon spread abroad in every direction, and were holden by most of the evangelical denominations with success. But at length they seemed to lose their power, and are now held with less frequency. But they opened the way to more protracted efforts, for the salvation of souls, which have been perpetuated to the present day and seem likely to be continued. It will be a sad day for the world when all our public religious operations shall be confined to the Sabbath and an evening or two in each week. This can never be the case, we think, till the ministry and the Church become generally backslidden from God. While they feel concerned for the cause of Christ, they will see the necessity of holding extra meetings, and calling in their brethren to help them preach and pray, and arouse the people to a proper state of anxiety about their souls. And it is to be hoped they will not want the necessary courage to hold them, though some may mock, and accuse them of "*getting up revivals.*" The truth is, those who do right will be censured, and especially if they infringe upon secular time by their religious movements. Many people will never brook such "*extravagance.*" But there are some who will rejoice in it. They may be a small minority, but, nevertheless, they are the hope of the Church. God has gained more conquests by these little bands of earnest, burning Christians, than by whole kingdoms of professors, who have had a name to live while they were dead.

The year 1825 was a remarkable year for revivals among the Indians, in which the famous Peter Jones acted a considerable part. New Orleans, which was settled near the close of the seventeenth century by French Roman Catholics (their religion established by law), was, perhaps, as vile a place as there was on the continent. In 1763 it was ceded to Spain, in 1801 it passed over to the French Republic, and three years after, to the United States by purchase. Then it began to thrive. The first Protestant Church in the place was erected by the Presbyterians in 1820. The Methodists made several efforts to secure a foothold, but with little success until 1825, when Rev. William Winans was placed on the Mississippi District, and took it under his care. The next year the minutes show twenty-three white and sixty colored members. Twelve years later, the town embraced five hundred and seventy colored and seventy white members. Mobile and Pensacola were entered by missionaries about the same time, under similar difficulties, but have made good progress. This year the total net increase was forty-two ministers, and 19,672 members. It was, however, a sad year for the Wyandot Mission, suffering as it did, the loss by death of "Between-the-logs," a most eminent chief, whose Christian influence had contributed much to the elevation of his people.

DEATH OF FREEBORN GARRETTSON.

This year, too, closed the career of that remarkable man of God, Rev. Freeborn Garrettson, who joined the itinerant ranks in 1775, when the whole Church consisted of *nineteen* preachers and 3,148

members. He had traversed the country from Nova Scotia to South Carolina, and proved himself true and faithful in every emergency. After fifty-two years of unquestioned fidelity to the Master he finished his course with joy, leaving the struggling Church of his early choice with 1,642 ministers and 421,105 members. We might make honorable mention also of James Smith, Seth Crowell, and other noble itinerants, who entered into rest about the same time, if our limits would permit. (See Bangs's History, Vol. III, page 364.)

CHAPTER VII.

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1828—TROUBLE WITH REFORMERS—METHODIST PROTESTANT CHURCH ORGANIZED—AFFAIRS IN CANADA—PUBLISHING FUND—DEATH OF BISHOP GEORGE—NEW SOURCES OF CONTROVERSY—SUCCESS WITH THE INDIANS, ETC.—GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1832—DEATH OF TWO BISHOPS ETC.

WE have now reached the period when the writer took his first lessons in Methodism, under the ministrations of Rev. Ebenezer Blake, of the New England Conference, and a member of the General Conference of 1824. About noon, one Summer's day, in 1828, a dusty, weather-beaten old man drove to the door of "mine host," and alighted with his saddle-bags in hand for dinner. On coming to the table he invoked a blessing and proceeded to detail the circumstances of a trial to which he had been subjected, and which had just been decided against him by the General Conference, holden at Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, leaving him completely out of the Church. He had traveled on horseback from far down in Maine to that Western city to argue his appeal, and justify his sentiments, and was now working his way back to die alone. But he was not *mad*. He told his story in a good spirit, censured nobody, loved the Church still, and the conference too, all having treated him very kindly, but thought he was right in the matter of difference between them. After

resting a day or two, he passed on, and died several years after, a good old man, having honestly kept the faith as he understood it. That was Rev. Joshua Randall, a strong man in some respects, but Dr. Fisk who argued the case against him, carried the whole conference, with a single exception. This was our first acquaintance with General Conferences.

TROUBLE WITH REFORMERS.

As suggested in writing of the last General Conference, a movement was inaugurated several years before to effect a radical reform in our Church government. It first appeared in private circles. The subject of lay representation in the conferences was the main topic, and it was argued that such representation was both right and expedient, and should be allowed. Some became very sanguine, and committed themselves to bring about the proposed change.

But private talk was not alone sufficient, and public discussion was deemed inexpedient, since few had courage enough to come out openly and vindicate their new conceptions; and, besides, there was little opportunity; for the interest was so limited, the agitation would not be tolerated in ordinary religious meetings, and special meetings could not be sustained. To give greater publicity to the question, the leading spirits in the movement started a paper at Trenton, New Jersey, in 1820, called the *Wesleyan Repository*. This afforded a fine opportunity for the malcontents to vent their spleen against the Church, and paint the beauties of their imaginary systems before the eyes of all people, without being

detected. To secure more efficiency by a concentration of influence, the friends of the cause in Baltimore formed what they called a "*Union Society*," and invited the friends of reform to do the same throughout the country—to which call many responded.

To harmonize the contending elements, the male members of Baltimore were called together in 1824, and united in a compromise memorial to the General Conference, then about to meet, asking for certain modifications of the government. This, however, did not please the more zealous of the "reformers," and they united themselves in a separate society, and *demande*d lay representation in the General Conference *as a natural and social right*. But the General Conference did not see cause to acquiesce in their wishes. That body believed that there was general satisfaction with the government as it was, and that while the alterations proposed might please the memorialists, they would give offense to ten times their number, and cripple the operations of the Church, which were being attended with wonderful success.

The failure of these memorials, prepared with so much labor and care, and speaking with so much emphasis and even authority, as one of them did, was quite intolerable. The conference was denounced in the most unsparing manner, and the war raged with increasing clamor. To give the more certainty to their movements, another paper was started in Baltimore, under the fascinating title of *Mutual Rights*. This at once became the vehicle of all the reasoning and wrath of the party. Men who were unwilling to take the open field, would hide here behind a

fictitious name, and complain bitterly. Indeed, it was an abusive concern, and it became obvious enough that no person was fit to belong to the Church who would patronize it. The Baltimore Conference, therefore, in 1827, called Rev. D. B. Dorsey, a member of that body, and yet one of the "Reformers," to an account, and left him without an appointment. A little after, eleven local preachers of Baltimore City, who were chief actors in the drama, and twenty-five lay members of the more belligerent kind, were cited to trial, and either expelled or suspended.

But these steps were not taken till the revolutionists had been long borne with, and earnestly entreated to desist from their ruinous course. Others were expelled afterward, and some withdrew; but the great mass, who sympathized with the movement at first, saw the folly of carrying it to such lengths, and preferred the Church without reform to the hazards of *revolution*, which they saw approaching. So that, on the whole, the loss to the Church was comparatively small.

A similar operation was experienced in other places, though on a smaller scale, and it seemed that the Church would be destroyed at a stroke. But when the crisis came, there was too much religion, or something else, to admit of it. The more considerate retraced their steps. They could not sell their privileges and the enjoyments of Church fellowship for a mere *abstraction*. *They* had never been oppressed, nor did they know of a member of the Church who had been. Why, therefore, be alarmed? Besides, they knew our government had worked to admiration, that it had accomplished all the ends of

government, had been the means of more good than any other in the world; and they knew not what the new system would be, or what it would effect.

This subject was forced upon the General Conference of 1828, by petitions of the most radical character, to which the conference replied in a very able report presented by Dr. Emory, but written by Dr. Bond, which has never been answered, though one vital point contended for by the petitioners has since been conceded, we trust, for the good of all concerned. (See Bangs's History, Vol. III, pp. 413-440.)

The two principal writers on the side of the "Reformers" were Rev. Nicholas Snethen and Rev. Alexander M'Caine, both formerly influential traveling preachers. To the surprise of many, Dr. Thomas E. Bond, a local preacher of Baltimore, and afterward editor of the *Christian Advocate and Journal*, took the first in hand, and presented to the public one of the clearest and most convincing defenses of our government ever written. Meeting all the various objections and prejudices in the community, and placing the subject in its proper aspect before the mind, it essentially enfeebled the spirit of secession, and restrained many who had not already gone too far to retrace their steps. Dr., afterward Bishop Emory, reviewed Mr. M'Caine's "History and Mystery of Methodist Episcopacy," and produced "The Defense of the Fathers," a work of singular strength of argument.

THE METHODIST PROTESTANT CHURCH.

The new system having been arranged and put in operation, and both sides of the controversy fully can-

vassed, the subject lost its interest, and the agitation culminated in the organization of the Methodist Protestant Church in November, 1830, going back to first principles, and recognizing the individual rights of preachers and people, and proposing little personal sacrifice for the general good. It is thoroughly Wesleyan in doctrine, seeks to maintain the itinerancy, though not rigidly, holds general and annual conferences, but eschews both bishops and presiding elders. The denomination has not prospered as was anticipated, having been weakened by differences, secessions, and various attempts at amalgamation with other Methodist bodies. Like other democratic Churches, they lack energy in government—a *head*. Responsibility is too diffused to be effective. They have erred in relying too much on government, and too little on hard, earnest work. Some thousands left our Church and went with them at the first, seriously injuring us at many points, but still they did not rapidly multiply; while the Methodist Episcopal Church increased more in members in 1829, 1830, and 1831, than they have ever dared to claim, all told. Their minutes for 1874, show 423 traveling, and 250 local preachers, with 65,000 lay members. They publish a weekly paper at Baltimore, called *The Methodist Protestant*, with some other works to meet their necessities. But it must not be forgotten that they suffered serious divisions, like other Churches, from slavery, many of their Southern members affiliating with the Methodist Episcopal Church South. Others have fallen in with us, especially since we admitted lay delegates to the General Conference.

How much the cause of God and Methodism have gained or lost by this movement we will not undertake to estimate. It is delightful to record, however, that the old animosity between the Protestants and the mother Church has largely subsided. The former have probably found out that all is not gold that glitters, and the latter has yielded a governmental point as we shall hereafter show, which will not be unlikely, in time, to bring both bodies into organic fellowship.

NEW ARRANGEMENTS IN CANADA.

We have already referred to a difficulty in relation to Canada, which was amicably settled with the Wesleyan connection by a division of territory. By that arrangement, Upper Canada fell under the jurisdiction of the Methodist Episcopal Church. But the preachers being chiefly from the United States, the civil authorities were jealous of them, and denied them certain rights enjoyed by natives, and by those who were from England, particularly in reference to the rites of matrimony. The Canada Conference, therefore, applied to the General Conference to be released from their responsibilities to that body. After careful deliberation, the General Conference of 1828 passed a resolution saying that, in view of the considerations set forth in the memorial of the Canada brethren, "the compact existing between the Canada Annual Conference and the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States be, and hereby is, dissolved by mutual consent." Expecting that the Canada Conference would adopt their form of government, with such modifications as their partic-

ular relations should render necessary, the conference authorized the bishops to ordain such persons to superintend the new organization as said conference should elect. Besides, an effort was made to grant the Canada Conference its proper proportion of the Book Concern, which failed to obtain the necessary votes in the annual conferences. It was therefore agreed in 1836 to give them a larger discount on the books than was usually allowed to our preachers, and the Missionary Society was permitted to appropriate the sum of seven hundred dollars annually for the support of the Indian Missions within their bounds.

These measures, and all others relating to the subject, were adopted with the best of feelings, and with the purest motives. The Canada Conference, however, maintained its independence but a short period, and then, instead of adopting the Episcopal form of government, under which they were trained, became connected with the Wesleyans of England, which connection was peaceably maintained until 1874, when the Wesleyans of the Eastern District, the conference of the Western, and the "New Connection Methodists" effected a consolidation of the three bodies into one, taking the name of "*The Methodist Church of Canada*, numbering 1,004 itinerant ministers, 1,027 local preachers, and 102,887 members, toward which all minor Methodist associations in that country seemed to be gravitating. They have provided for six annual conferences and a General Conference, to be composed of clerical and lay delegates, to meet in September, 1878, and thereafter once in four years. They have no bishops

or presiding elders, but do their work by presidents, chairmen of districts, and committees, much after the style of the British Conference. They publish the *Christian Guardian*, at Toronto, and the *Provincial Wesleyan*, at Halifax, connected with which they carry on their other publishing business.

Whether the General Conference had constitutional authority to relinquish its hold upon an annual conference as in the case described, or to exclude an annual conference from its fellowship, as was at one time contemplated, are questions which admit of reasonable doubt, but in the present case no serious complaint has been made. It is to be hoped that there will be no further occasion for its consideration. (See Bangs's History, Vol. III, pp. 392-395.)

EVENTS FOLLOWING THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1828.

Leaving the General Conference of 1828 under a cloud of threatening circumstance, we pass along to notice the current events of the following four years. The Church embraced nineteen annual conferences, five bishops, including Bishop M'Kendree, who was very feeble and could do but little, 1,642 traveling preachers, and 421,156 members. The Missionary Society was disbursing about \$6,000 per annum, and the unfortunate educational interests of the Church were looking more hopeful, there being six or seven promising institutions in successful operation, two of which held college charters. The Book Concern was deeply in debt, owing to the ruinous practice of sending its books to preachers all over the country to sell on commission. So many depositories required more capital than the concern possessed, and

would have bankrupted it had the policy been long continued. It, therefore, could not cope with the American Bible, Sunday-school, and Tract Societies, which had undertaken to monopolize the patronage of all denominations. This state of affairs led the General Conference of 1828 to provide for the establishment of

A PUBLISHING FUND.

Its design was to enable the Book Concern to furnish books and tracts at about the same rates they were offered by the American Societies. One hundred thousand dollars was the sum sought, the interest of which was to be applied in the manner named; but it never amounted to more than about forty thousand, but this helped a little; and with the abolition of the commission business referred to, and the transfer of our patronage to the American Bible Society, both of which occurred soon after, brought essential relief. And, had not the concern been loaded with so many outside Church expenses, it might long since have sold its books at a cheaper rate than any house in the country, as it did for one period, without a dollar from benvolent collections.

DEATH OF BISHOP GEORGE.

Bishop George was born in Staunton, Virginia, and brought up among Episcopalians. He was converted when eighteen years of age under the Methodist ministry, of which he afterward said, "Then I felt grace in my heart, God in man, heaven upon earth. I was in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, and all around me, each shrub, each flower, each leaf, spoke

the praises of the Father who made them all." He began immediately to exercise in prayer and exhortation, and not long after to preach under the most solemn conviction that God had called him to the work. In 1790 he was received into the traveling connection on trial, and graduated to full membership in regular order, and was soon after appointed presiding elder. His health failing him he was located for a short time. In 1803, he re-entered the itinerancy, and served as presiding elder most of the time, till 1816, when he was elected bishop. He was a man of fervent piety, a powerful preacher, full of faith and love, and died shouting "Glory to God." He was not so much of a president as preacher, and could run a camp-meeting better than a conference. But his fervor, and soul-power atoned for all deficiencies in minor respects, and carried him safely through. (See *Methodist Magazine* for 1830.)

NEW SOURCES OF CONTROVERSY.

The revival of our publishing interests, manifested by the re-issue of the magazine in 1818, the publication of the *Christian Advocate* in 1826, and several doctrinal and exegetical books, vindictory of Arminian sentiments, created great alarm among Calvinists of different sects, who made an almost simultaneous assault upon us. Our Sabbath-school Union, formed in 1827, gave much offense, as it contemplated the supply of our schools with books more in harmony with our doctrines and methods, thus withdrawing our patronage from the American Sunday-school Union. It was pronounced *sectarian*, and antagonistic to *union*, and it was so to any union that

was offered to our Church by that society. Though Methodism was slightly recognized in its board of management, it was carefully kept in the background, and had no appreciable influence over its operations. Our opponents in this matter did not mistake the bearing of our separation from them. The next best thing to indoctrinating our children in their views was to furnish them books which ignored Methodism. The object of our Union was to teach religion doctrinally and experimentally, as we understood it; and, demanding the necessary books for gratuitous distribution, it encouraged the agents of the Book Concern to go forward and produce them, which they have been doing ever since, furnishing an outfit for Sunday-schools which is not excelled by any house in the country.

Few, if any, of our own Church have a just appreciation of the completeness of the supplies for Sunday-schools furnished by our agents. It embraces more than fifteen hundred bound books, made expressly for libraries, besides catechisms, question-books, maps, cards, etc.

Another circumstance which operated to augment the prejudice against us was, the organization of the Bible Society of the Methodist Church on the recommendation of the General Conference of 1828. But, why was this done? 'Simply because we could not obtain free Bibles and Testaments for our poor schools, which were excluded under pretense of being sectarian. But when the Book Concern came to issue Bibles to supply our wants, it was found practicable to give us an even chance in the American Bible Society; whereupon, in 1836, our Bible Society

was dissolved, and we again affiliated with the American Bible Society, and have done so ever since, only printing Bibles and Testaments with notes, references, etc., such as the Bible Society could not issue without giving offense to some of its patrons.

Some of our books were assailed, as well as our measures. "Clarke's Commentaries," and "Wesley's Notes," came in for a large share of attention, and were severely charged. This gave Calvinism and Methodism another opportunity to compare notes, and did good, as it corrected many misrepresentations which prejudice had conceived and put in circulation. Some were sure that we were in league with foreign emissaries, and had immense funds somewhere which would avail us in case we failed to support ourselves. This explained to them our tenacity in holding on to places we entered, without any visible means of support. The same anxious critics were considerably exercised about our Church property, and claimed that it was owned by the General Conference and the bishops. This led to the development of our excellent method of protecting it against the monopoly of factions, who might be disposed to pervert it to other purposes than were contemplated by the donors. The loss of one college and some one hundred and fifty churches by a single denomination, suggested to our enemies that, perhaps, after all, we were not as grasping or foolish as they had imagined, and they made haste to imitate our good example.

The Methodist government, and other peculiarities, were also discussed with much of interest, but were so vindicated that they shone the brighter for the cloud that was cast upon them. Our assumed

ignorance was a staple count in every bill of indebtedment; we had not been to college, and therefore could not preach, and had no right to attempt it; but the people did not "see it," so we kept along. Besides, in testing the preachers of that day, the learned objectors found them better posted in theology, and stronger in argument, than they imagined. Even in the languages they were not always sure of victory, for, though few of the preachers had been through college, many of them could speak in other tongues, as we have noticed in the case of Jesse Lee.

PROGRESS IN SEVERAL PARTICULARS.

The year 1829 was a successful year among the Indians; many were soundly converted. It is interesting to trace the labors of the fathers in behalf of this unfortunate people. Had they been allowed to live where they were, they would undoubtedly have been Christianized, and constituted citizens. But, being broken up and scattered every few years, how could they improve as has been required? The Indians in Georgia were in the way of slavery; and in the West, in the way of the emigrants. Their lands were wanted by the whites, and the project of transferring their owners beyond the Mississippi was devised. This was the commencement of persecutions, wars, and desolation. Our Church had no less than 17 missionaries and 850 Church members among the Cherokees in Georgia. It had also four thousand members among the Choctaws, embracing the chief men of the nation, and large numbers in other tribes; but the work was greatly disturbed by these forced

removals. The Minutes of 1832 show a decrease in our Indian membership of 2,089, owing to this cause.

The mission to Galena, Illinois, was opened this year also, in a small, loose, speculating population. What wonderful improvements have been made in forty-six years! At the same time, 1829, Edward T. Taylor, of world-wide fame, opened his mission to the seamen of Boston. It was a grand success for God and humanity, not so much in the accumulation of members as in the diffusion of Christian sentiment and feeling. New York had commenced operations in behalf of seamen a little before.

The year following inaugurated special missions to the slaves. Till now they had been served by the regular circuit preachers, and nearly one-sixth of our Church (62,814) were colored people, mostly slaves; but there were many who could not be reached by this means, and missions were established in South Carolina and Georgia, which were afterward greatly extended. These, with missions to the Western-bound emigrants, gave work to every willing minister, and exhausted every dollar that could be raised. The net increase of members in 1830 was 28,410, notwithstanding the loss of nearly ten thousand by the separation of Canada, and the radical and destructive measures of the Reformers so-called.

Our educational interests prospered also, for a wonder, giving us three additional collegiate institutions about this time, namely: Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut; Randolph Macon College, Virginia; and Lagrange College, Alabama.

OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1832.

This body elected two bishops, to-wit: Revs. James O. Andrew and John Emory. It adopted a strong report on temperance, quite ahead of the times, written by Rev Henry B. Bascom. It also completed a modification of the proviso connected with the "Restrictive Rules" making a change of them practicable. (Bangs's History, Vol. IV, pp. 102-106.) In other respects its action is of little interest to the general reader.

EVENTS THAT FOLLOWED.

This conference closed with six bishops and twenty-two annual conferences. Rev. Melville B. Cox having offered himself as a missionary to Africa, he was accepted, and arrived in Liberia, March 9, 1833, and soon laid the foundation of the Liberia Conference, which has continued to the present time. On the 21st of July following, he died in the Lord, aged thirty-three years, feeling what he earnestly expressed before he left New York, namely, "Let thousands fall before Africa be given up!" A marble monument, the gift of affection, marks his resting-place in that far-off land.

Such was the success of our missions among the slaves that others were established in the South-west in 1833, and gave a new impulse to the collections. Two other colleges—namely, at Carlisle and Meadville—were added to our literary institutions the same year. Both, having failed in other hands, were passed over to us gratuitously, and both still live and flourish. The former, known as Dickinson

College, was founded by the Presbyterians in 1783, and was estimated worth \$40,000 at the time of its transfer. Dr. J. P. Durbin was elected its first president. It was further endowed by an addition of \$45,000, and opened, in 1834, under flattering circumstances. The latter, known as Alleghany College, also in Pennsylvania, three hundred and thirty-four miles north-west of Philadelphia, was first chartered in 1815, but, failing of its object, was passed over to the Pittsburg and Erie Conferences, and placed under the presidency of Dr. Martin Ruter. It has had a struggle, in common with similar institutions, but it has triumphed. The academy at Lima, New York, entered upon its career of usefulness also about the same time, under the principalship of Dr. Samuel Luckey.

These accessions to our educational appliances were regarded as grand achievements, and they were so; but we are compelled to admit that the *power* of the ministry did not increase with its literary advantages. Dr. Bangs, speaking of one highly educated preacher, Rev. John M. Smith, who was in his opinion almost a perfect model, says: "Many who were far inferior to him in learning and science, who understood no other language than their mother-tongue, and who went out into the field of itinerancy from the common vocations of life, far outshone him as preachers of the Gospel, and much exceeded him in winning souls to Christ."

This is not an isolated case. Similar facts are found every-where, and they have not contributed to the zeal of the Church for education. God means to keep us impressed, perhaps, that education can

not make a successful preacher, that one called of the Holy Spirit may achieve wonders without education, and that both classes are needed to make a complete working force. It is difficult to educate a man so as not to neutralize his natural and spiritual genius and force. If we will avoid the mistakes of our predecessors, we must give education to our ministers without subtracting from their spiritual efficiency.

This year was one of general revival, yielding a total increase of 51,143 members, 4,476 of whom were colored, proving that our missions to the slaves were a success; but we suffered a further loss of 165 Indians, growing out of their forcible removal from their homes.

Near the close of this year, Rev. Messrs. Rufus Spaulding and Samuel O. Wright, with their wives, embarked for Liberia, to fill the place made vacant by the death of Mr. Cox. They arrived there January 1, 1834, and commenced their work. February 9th, Mr. Spaulding was seized with the fever of the country, as were all his associates soon after. March 1st, he wrote, "Sister Wright is dead." Her husband soon followed her. Finding themselves hopelessly enfeebled, Mr. Spaulding and his wife returned home, leaving behind them the heroic Miss Farrington, one of the family, who suffered much, but lived to do good service.

THE FLAT-HEAD INDIAN MISSION.

The year 1834 was distinguished by the establishment of a mission to the Flat-head Indians, in Oregon. They had incidentally heard that there was

a people living toward the "rising sun," who possessed superior knowledge of the Great Spirit, by means of a book which he had given them. They accordingly called a council, and appointed a delegation of four of their leading men to cross the Rocky Mountains, and inquire into the matter. These representatives arrived at St. Louis, and commanded much attention. Our Church was prompt to regard this movement as a call from God to undertake the evangelization of the people who had come three thousand miles for light. Revs. Jason and Daniel Lee, uncle and nephew, and both preachers, with Cyrus Shepherd, as teacher, offered themselves for the work, and, after much suffering, reached their destined field. They were afterward re-enforced from time to time, and the work has gone on ever since, opening up the country, and laying the foundations of a wealthy State. The poor Indians were greatly benefited, but not to the extent anticipated, owing to their migratory habits. The work has been organized into an annual conference for several years, which now numbers 61 traveling preachers, 3,725 members, and 4,471 Sabbath-school scholars. The conference publishes the *Pacific Christian Advocate*, sustains the Willamette University and the Portland Academy.

This mission created much interest at the time, and elicited liberal contribution to the missionary society, swelling the aggregate amount from \$17,097.05 in 1833, to \$35,700.15 the year following.

This year, too, gave birth to another college at Lebanon, Illinois, known as the M'Kendree College, which has done a good work, and is in healthy

progress. It also opened new missions. Worcester, Massachusetts, which had hitherto successfully resisted all attempts to establish Methodism within its hallowed precincts, was this year favored with a missionary appropriation of, perhaps, \$200, and the venerable George Pickering was appointed to that most thoroughly Calvinistic town. The next year he reported one hundred and nine members. Three years after, the society became self-sustaining, and has grown into five good Churches, numbering 1,252 members, to say nothing of many other Churches that have sprung up in contiguous places, through its influence. The missionary collections from that place have been large for many years, showing that missionary money appropriated to domestic purposes is sometimes more than a good investment.

THE DEPARTURE OF TWO BISHOPS.

The year 1835 was saddened by the death of two bishops—Bishop M'Kendree, the senior, and Bishop Emory, the junior, of the board. The former had been feeble for years, doing, however, all he could for God and the Church. In the days of his strength he traversed the continent on horseback; but now for years he had visited the conferences, and preached within a more limited circle. He was present at the General Conference of 1832, and, as he arose to leave it, the day before it adjourned, "he halted," says Dr. Bangs, "for a moment, leaning upon his staff, and, with faltering lips, but with eyes swimming in tears, he said: 'My brethren and children, love one another. Let all things be done without strife or vain-glory, and strive to keep the unity of the Spirit

in the bonds of peace.' He then spread forth his trembling hands, and, lifting his eyes to the heavens, pronounced with faltering and affectionate accents the apostolic benediction."

Bishop M'Kendree was a good man; a wise counselor; a mighty preacher, especially at times; a thorough Methodist, and sincerely in earnest in saving souls. Appearing in the General Conference at Baltimore in 1808, he entered the Light Street pulpit in the rough garb of a frontiersman, and, after working up to his subject in rather an uninteresting way, he struck a current, and carried all before him. "At first, sudden shrieks, as of persons in distress, were heard in different parts of the house; then shouts of praise; and in every direction sobs and groans, and eyes overflowing with tears, while many were prostrated upon the floor, or lay helpless on the seats.

When he descended from the pulpit, all were filled with admiration of his talents," and many exclaimed, "*This is the man whom God delights to honor!*" He was soon after elected bishop, receiving *ninety-five* out of one hundred and twenty-eight votes, and, fortunately, it was not a mistake. He preached his last sermon at Nashville, Tennessee, November 23, 1834, and from that hour he descended gradually and peacefully to the grave, breathing his last March 5, 1835, repeating, "All is well for time or for eternity."

Bishop Emory, who also died this year, was born in Maryland in 1788; obtained the witness of his acceptance with God at the age of seventeen; abandoned the legal profession, for which he had been classically educated, and in the year 1810 he entered

the traveling ministry in the Philadelphia Conference. He was a member of the General Conference in 1816 and thenceforward. In 1820 he was appointed to represent his Church in the British Conference; four years after, assistant book agent; and in 1828 he was made principal agent in charge of that growing interest. He filled all these positions with marked ability. In 1832 he was elected bishop, in which office he displayed the same effectiveness that had characterized his course from the beginning till 1835, when he was found dying in the highway, having been thrown from his carriage in going to Baltimore.

Dr. Stevens's description of him seems to be so just that we heartily indorse it. He says: "In person he was below the ordinary size; slight, not weighing over one hundred and twenty-five pounds, but well proportioned and erect. His features were expressive of tranquil thoughtfulness, firmness, and kindliness. He was long a sufferer from gastric ailments, but was a persevering worker, a thorough student, an early riser, and rigorously systematic. Down to his day the Church had not possessed a more scholarly, a better trained, intellect. He was pre-eminent as a debater in conferences, especially in the General Conference, and his legal skill solved for it some of its most difficult legislative problems. Withal, he was remarkably versatile, and successful in all that he attempted. His writings in defense of his denomination, both in its theology and polity, were always authoritative and conclusive. His piety was profound, steady, yet fervent. He saw in his own Church the mightiest system of agencies for the

evangelization, not only of the New World, but of the whole world, that Christendom afforded, and he consecrated himself entirely to the development and application of its forces." (His. of M. E. Church, Vol. IV, p. 250.)

CHAPTER VIII.

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1836—IMPORTANT ACTION—
OF SLAVERY AND ABOLITION—NEW MISSIONARY FIELDS
OPENED—CENTENARY OF METHODISM—THE ALL-ABSORB-
ING QUESTION—IMPORTANT MEASURES ADOPTED, ETC.

THE General Conference of 1836 was held at Cincinnati, Ohio, Bishops Roberts, Soule, Hedding, and Andrew presiding. Rev. William Lord, representative from the British Conference, was introduced and cordially received. The conference made a suitable response to his address, and appointed Rev. Dr. Fisk, then in Europe, our representative to the Wesleyan Conference. Commemorative services were held in honor of the deceased Bishops M'Kendree and Emory, Bishop Soule preaching in relation to the former and Bishop Roberts representing the latter. These were mournful occasions, all feeling that a great loss had been sustained.

IMPORTANT MEASURES ADOPTED.

The correspondence of the Missionary Society had been hitherto conducted by one of the book agents. This conference wisely determined to transfer the supervision of the missionary work to a separate officer, and accordingly appointed Dr. Nathan Bangs corresponding secretary. This was the commencement of our present order of missionary management.

Another important measure was the construction of the Liberia mission into an annual conference, "possessing all the rights, powers, and privileges of other annual conferences, except that of sending delegates to the General Conference and drawing its annual dividend from the avails of the book concern and Chartered Fund. This exception was overruled (whether rightfully or not time will show) by the General Conference of 1868, and delegates were admitted. This conference, too, though oppressed with the recent destruction of the book concern by fire, recognized a weekly paper, the *Western Christian Advocate*, lately started at Cincinnati, and ordered the publication of two other similar papers, one at Charleston, South Carolina, and the other at Nashville, Tennessee, making four official papers and four unofficial, namely: *Zion's Herald*, *Maine Wesleyan Journal*, *Virginia Conference Journal*, at Richmond, Virginia, and the *Auburn Banner*, at Auburn, New York. Besides, it elected three bishops, to-wit: Beverly Waugh, Wilbur Fisk, and Thomas A. Morris. The first and the last-named were duly consecrated; but Dr. Fisk declined the office on his return from Europe, and was called to his reward before the next General Conference. He was a model man and minister, well educated, genial, but intensely devout, a natural, ready speaker, an effective reasoner, and a powerful preacher in the best sense of the word. Being one of the first regular graduates in our ministry, he exercised a commanding influence. Doing good service a few years as pastor, he was made presiding elder, from which he was elected the first principal of the Wilbraham Academy. To this work

he devoted all his energies until 1831, when he was elected the first president of the Wesleyan University, at Middletown, Connecticut, where he ended his labors and his life in the *forty-eighth* year of his age.

Dr. Stevens justly characterizes him as "a man of intrinsic greatness, of the highest style of Christian character, of rare pulpit eloquence, full of grace, dignity, and power. He led up the whole Methodism of the East in educational enterprise, ministerial culture, and public influence, while his saintly life presented a model Christian character which impressed his entire denomination."

OF THE LOCATION OF PREACHERS.

The difficulty of the itinerant work, and the small and uncertain remuneration it generally received, had led to numerous locations; but now, it seems, some were desired to locate for one reason or another who were indisposed to do so, and the authority of the conference to locate them without their consent was questioned. This General Conference therefore made a rule authorizing an annual conference to locate a member without his consent, and even in his absence, but provided for giving him a hearing in every case; but the provision for a hearing was rescinded in 1848, without attracting much attention. The rule was evidently aimed at certain ministers who were giving more attention to abolition than was thought expedient, but who could not be excluded on moral grounds.

OF SLAVERY AND ABOLITION.

The great questions of this session, however, were slavery and abolition. New England had begun to

consider the extirpation of slavery in a very serious manner, and there was much alarm among many lest it should lead to sad results. The South was intensely excited, and had been threatening separation for several years. But, as this subject is to have special consideration in another chapter, we will pass it for the present, except so far as to say that the rule made at this conference and strengthened in 1840 (see Bangs's History, Vol. IV, p. 414), for the arrest of superannuated preachers living without the bounds of their own conferences, was made to catch certain abolitionists, particularly Rev. La Roy Sunderland, who belonged to the New England Conference and lived in the city of New York; but it was a little too late to reach him. (See Discipline, par. 322.) But it has done no harm that we are aware of, and may not do any except under strong party administration. And we may add that this conference also passed a string of resolutions in relation to agencies, with particular reference to the same class of men. (See Bangs's History, Vol. IV, pp. 265, 266.) Dr. Bangs, who understood their history and objects better than any other man, seems to have thought that they did much good, and perhaps they did; but abolition rolled on, notwithstanding, until it prevailed.

A REMARKABLE DECLINE.

The Church had enjoyed great peace and prosperity for several years; but all at once there was a falling off—an actual decrease in members—which taxed the philosophy of wise men to explain. Some attributed it to the abolition excitement, others to the want of church accommodations, while many

thought it the natural result of previous excesses; but about one-third of the loss was among the Indians, who were in the process of removal, and one-quarter among the colored people, who were probably being more restricted in their privileges by the antislavery agitations, which rapidly increased about that time. But, whatever the cause, the depression was soon over, and the tide of prosperity in the Church commenced to flow again with unexampled results.

The year of 1836 gave existence to our mission at Rio de Janeiro, by Rev. Justin Spaulding. The next year, the mission was strengthened by the appointment of Rev. D. P. Kidder and two teachers. The same year, Rev. John Dempster opened a mission at Buenos Ayres. These missions have not accomplished all that was anticipated.

Texas embraced 193,000 square miles, and formed a part of the Mexican Republic, but was proclaimed independent March 2, 1836, and its independence was recognized by the United States early in the following year. Many Americans, generally slave-holders, had settled there, and some were anxious for the Gospel. Accordingly in 1837, Dr. Ruter, with two young preachers, was sent out, and made a successful beginning in the work of evangelizing that Romish community. Others followed, as the necessities of the work required, and in 1840 the mission was constituted an annual conference. The following year it reported nineteen traveling preachers, and 1,853 members. In 1845, Texas was admitted to the Union as a State, another triumph of the slave power, embracing forty traveling preachers, and

4,970 members. (See Wilson's *Rise and Fall of the Slave Power*, Vol. I., pp. 590-650.)

Dr. Ruter projected a college, which the government appropriated 8,880 acres of land. The college was duly established in a new town called Ruterville, in honor of its enterprising projector, though he did not live to see it in operation. Our Texas Conference now numbers 15,014 members.

Dr. Ruter commenced his itinerant career in New England in 1801, at the age of sixteen; went as missionary to Canada in 1804; was eight years Book agent at Cincinnati; was four years President of Augusta College; three years President of Alleghany College, which position he resigned for a mission in Texas, where he ended his life and labors. Born in humble circumstances, without much early education, he astonished both himself and his friends by his literary and scientific attainments. His acquaintance with Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and French was respectable, and was turned to the best account. He was a good-looking, healthy, common-sense man, of untiring industry and indomitable perseverance, and achieved much for God and the Church, more than most men of greater opportunities. He lived and died in the confidence of his brethren, and no doubt is reaping the reward of a "faithful servant."

ORIGIN OF MISSIONS TO THE GERMANS.

The influx of Germans to the country could not fail to attract attention, particularly as one of the number, a modest but thoroughly educated youth, was mysteriously converted to God. Beginning at once to declare to his countrymen what the Lord

had done for his soul, a mission was established at Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1836, and young Nast was appointed to take charge of it. Being an able man and full of zeal, he drew many to hear him, and to Christ. Afterward he visited his native land and laid the foundations of our missions in that country, numbering at present nearly 9,000 members, embracing schools, a publishing house, and other necessary appliances. The German missions have been the means of converting many Papists, and their watchword is onward!

The year 1838 was one of prosperity, though we suffered a decrease in our colored members of 2,996 and 538 Indians, the former loss growing out of the antislavery discussion perhaps, and the latter probably the result of the removals before mentioned.

The year 1839 was made interesting by the return of Jason Lee to the States to obtain re-enforcements for Oregon. There being no means of living in that country the missionaries had to provide for themselves, and it was necessary, therefore, to carry out farmers, mechanics, etc., to do the work, that the missionaries might give themselves wholly to religious duties. Accordingly, a company of fifty persons was made up, including six missionaries, and all sailed from New York October 9th, and arrived in safety, after a voyage of about ten month. In the mean time, a remarkable work of grace broke out among the Indians of that country, resulting, it was believed, in the conversion of one full thousand of them. This was very encouraging, and gave a new impulse to the missionary enterprise, swelling the collections from \$96,087 to \$132,480 in a single year.

THE CENTENARY OF METHODISM.

The principal event of 1839 was the Centenary of Methodism. Though it was but seventy-three years since the first Methodist meeting was holden on this continent, its centennial in London seemed to be too important an event to the Church on this side of the water to be passed over in silence. But it was impossible to bring our people to the same concert of feeling and action that was displayed among the Wesleysans, scattered as they were over so vast a territory, and pressed with so many different objects, often requiring more than they were able to perform. But a general plan of religious exercise and benevolence was adopted, and carried out with as much uniformity as was to be expected. The services were salutary in their influence. They contributed to a better understanding of the history, principles, unity, aims, and successes of Methodists, and gave a new impulse to the general body. The amount contributed for different objects was estimated at \$600,000; but it is exceedingly doubtful whether so much was realized by the various treasuries for which it was contributed. Much of it was applied to local objects, that is, for Church debts, building churches, etc. Considerable to the superannuated preachers, education, and to missions. But it all told on our growing cause.

It was, indeed, a sublime spectacle to contemplate the assemblage of more than *one million* of people, joined by, perhaps, three times that number of friends, uniting to offer up thanksgiving to God for his boundless mercy to a lost world, manifested in

the gift of his Son! And as one of many rivulets, which flow from that exhaustless fountain of eternal love, ran through the channel opened by Wesley, it seemed right and proper for his numerous sons in the Gospel to commemorate the day which originated this flowing stream of grace and mercy. Some, indeed, affected to call it a species of idolatry. But why is it any more an act of idolatry to praise God for raising up John Wesley, than it is to praise him for any other blessing, whether temporal or spiritual? It is, indeed, marvelous that many, whose tender conscience will not permit them to render honor to whom honor is due, do not scruple to defame the character of those men who, like John Wesley, have rendered the most service to mankind, merely because they have dissented from them in opinion on some important points. (Bangs's History, Vol. IV, page 296.)

The Methodist Episcopal Church numbered at this time 749,216 members; 3,557 traveling preachers; and 5,856 local preachers.

THE ALL-ABSORBING QUESTION.

Every period has its predominant topic of interest. That which attracted most attention in the Church and nation from 1836 to 1840, and indeed long after, was slavery. Some attempted to justify it from the Bible, others denounced it as "the sum of all villainies," while many regarded it as an evil, and opposed abolition, lest, in removing the tares, it should root up the wheat also. Abolitionists, like their colored brethren, did not seem to have any rights which their opponents were bound to

respect The subject permeated every class of society, and gave shape to almost every expression. Bishops and many others trembled for the ark of Methodism, and made haste to protect it by radical measures, which though ineffective, created a distrust of the Episcopal power, since developed in the adoption of lay delegation, and the projection of other modifications of our government that will sooner or later claim attention. But we must not particularize here. Considering the terrible excitements which generally prevailed, the Church was wonderfully sustained. As before stated, we suffered a small loss in 1836, but our *net* gain during the following eight years was 822,282 members. God seems to have honored the attempt to "unloose the heavy burdens" with a special baptism of the Spirit.

A PASSING REFLECTION.

In looking back to those days, and remembering the giants who ruled over the unpitied minority, we are surprised to see that they are nearly all gone. One only of the ten delegates from the New York Conference remains, and the same is true of other conferences. They all played their part for a few brief years, and then stepped aside to give place to their successors. Though powerful in their way and time, they now live only in history. As years or misfortunes increased, they descended from their proud eminence, finding it harder to retreat than to advance, to lay off the harness than to put it on. But this is destiny, and it is well for the young to think of it, and prepare themselves to *deserve* respect when they can no longer command it.

We were impressed with these thoughts in considering the history of one beautiful man, distinguished more for his pulpit eloquence and pastoral fidelity than for his management or forensic power. He was in great demand in the Middle States for many years. Yet the time came before he was sixty years of age that he was not wanted, and it broke his heart. This would not have been so, had his old admirers lived and retained their position. But dying, or standing aside to give place to new-comers, their old love could not benefit him, and their successors only knew him as an old preacher, while they coveted one more youthful and sprightly.

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1840

convened in the city of Baltimore, and was treated to a very long and elaborate address from the bishops, evidently written by Bishop Soule, and more than one third of it was devoted to abolitionists, expressing sentiments which naturally led its author to affiliate with the South in repudiating the old antislavery Methodist Episcopal Church, and in uniting with that of the Church South.

This conference was honored with the presence of the celebrated Rev. Robert Newton, as the representative of English Methodism, who was cordially received, as was the letter which he bore, except so far as it referred to the vexed question. To this point the Conference made a respectful reply, attempting to justify its position in the usual way of the times, throwing the responsibility on the State governments, etc. The missionary society was reported as being in a flourishing condition, having appropriated

\$411,810.96 during the four preceding years, and more than doubled the collections of 1839 in 1840.

This conference was also entertained with more than the usual number and variety of petitions and memorials, particularly on the subject of the day. A very considerable number of them asked for "a moderate episcopacy,"—implicating the episcopal administration since 1836, which we shall notice hereafter—the election of presiding elders by their conferences, who had in many cases represented the bishops, and not their real constituents, and lay delegation. These petitions came generally from abolitionists, but effected nothing, as was probably expected. Yet some of these same delegates who opposed the prayer of the petitioners, afterward struck for lay delegation, and carried it. That their successors may some time grant the other particulars in the prayer is by no means impossible. Great men have been known to change their opinions, and favor what they once opposed, and they might have been right in both cases. With regard to *prudential* matters, what may be inexpedient to-day may be very appropriate hereafter.

We have seen with what difficulties our Church made its first real success in education. But our literary institutions had now come to multiply so rapidly that the General Conference of 1840 deemed it necessary to suggest caution, and advised the permanent settlement of existing ones before proceeding to originate others. It fully indorsed the administration of the bishops, and avowed the right of bishops and presiding elders to refuse to put a motion to vote which they should consider foreign to the proper business, or inconsistent with constitutional provisions,

and also, their right to adjourn a conference without a vote." Temperance, too, received special attention; but the substitution of Mr. Wesley's rule in the place of the one then in force failed, by a ridiculous misconstruction of the proviso, connected with the restrictive rules, making a three-fourths vote of each and every annual conference necessary to a change, instead of three-fourths of the whole who should be present and vote. Ridiculous, we say, because this proviso was rearranged, as elsewhere shown, to avoid this very construction, to which it was fairly liable in its former wording.

OF RECEIVING PREACHERS, ETC.

There had long existed a feeling among us that some provision should be made for receiving ministers and members from other denominations without subjecting them to the usual probation, etc., required of others; but nothing had been effected. This conference met the demand in a wise and fraternal manner, setting an example to conceited sectaries that they may profitably consider. Under this arrangement we recognize the orders and standing of Christian ministers and members of every denomination, and admit them to our fellowship without re-baptism or re-ordination. Fortunately the rule did not require a letter of recommendation. That would often have rendered it ineffective, since many Churches would give no such letter. It merely provided for receiving members "in good standing" in other Churches, without stating what evidence of that fact should be required. Hence, where we knew such applicants could not obtain letters, owing to the

prejudice of their Churches, we took them without, advising them first to send their pastors letters of withdrawal. This was a very convenient arrangement, though we have had no great use for it, believing it to be more becoming to swell our numbers by converting sinners to God than by proselyting saints of other denominations. (See Discipline, par. 49, 209, 213.)

OTHER MEASURES ADOPTED.

This conference resolved to have three missionary secretaries instead of one, and elected Nathan Bangs for the East, William Capers for the South, and Edward R. Ames for the West; but this arrangement did not seem to give satisfaction, though it considerably increased the collections, and was abolished after four years' trial, and the work was devolved upon one secretary, Rev Charles Pitman, a man of great popularity with his people.

Bishop Soule was appointed to represent the Church in the British Conference in 1842, with Rev. Thomas B. Sargent as traveling companion. Bishop Hedding received a similar appointment to the Canada Conference. The pastoral address was fragrant with congratulation, seeing little to regret, and much to expect in the way of progress. Bishop Soule closed the conference with a few remarks, rejoicing in the excellent spirit that had been manifested, and the prospect of peace and unity, little thinking that in five brief years from that day, he himself, the most loyal among loyalists, would no longer be a member even of the Church he had so much loved.

But, after all, the conference did not satisfy the extremists of either party. The middle men were better pleased, because they had passed another crisis without a general "break-up." They believed the South would stand it, and hoped the abolitionists would, and devoutly prayed that something might occur to prevent the threatened division.

CHAPTER IX.

GREAT REVIVALS—CONFERENCE RIGHTS—GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1844—POWERS OF BISHOPS—RESTRICTIONS ON THE ITINERANCY—CONFLICT WITH PROVIDENCE.

FROM the year 1840 to the year 1844, a general revival of religion prevailed throughout the country. This fact was recognized by the bishops in their address to the General Conference in 1844, wherein they declared that “No period of our denominational existence has been more signally distinguished by great and extensive revivals of the work of God, and the increase of the Church.” The work was attributed to various causes. The real exciting cause was, doubtless, the outpouring of the Spirit of God upon the public heart, directing attention to the subject. While we believe that the Spirit operates more or less at all times, and upon all minds, and that all good thoughts, purposes, and emotions are attributable to its influence, we can not doubt that it is occasionally shed forth in peculiar copiousness and power, arousing Christians to an unusual degree of spiritual interest, and begetting tenderness on the minds of others. This seems to have been the case at the time referred to; one evidence of which was, that numerous little prayer-meetings were instituted, to pray especially for a revival of religion and the conversion of sinners. There was a

pretty general conviction among evangelical Christians that it was time for God to work, and they were so anxious to see a revival they exerted themselves with a degree of earnestness, appropriateness, and energy, scarcely ever witnessed among some of them since the days of Whitefield.

While, therefore, we attribute the work to God, as its efficient author, we recognize peculiar Christian exertion as its means. If it originated in a remarkable outpouring of the Spirit, it was encouraged and carried forward instrumentally by a remarkable effort. Measures which had been repudiated as repugnant to the true philosophy of revivals, were now introduced and pushed with much fervor. The laity were called into action, foreign aid was invoked, evangelists were flying from field to field, and the work of saving souls was made the all-absorbing subject.

Another circumstance probably had considerable effect. We refer to the emphatic inculcation of the doctrine of Christ's second coming, and the transactions which are to follow—sentiments known as Millerism. Various ministers of different denominations heralded these truths all over the land with great pathos and power. The errors with which they were associated did not lessen their influence, but rather rendered them more impressive. Taken together, the presentation was an alarming affair. Some of the sermons delivered on different occasions were frightful to “the very *elect*,” and it would not have been wonderful if many had plunged into hopeless despair, for the argument was so nicely drawn that few could see its fallacy; the honesty and devotion

of many of the speakers so manifest, they could not well be questioned; and the sentiments inculcated so exciting in their tendency, that none but very good or very bad people could hear them proclaimed without trembling for their own safety. Hence, while few believed the doctrine that Christ would come in 1843, many *feared* it; and having full confidence in the divine reality and importance of religion, they were impelled to seek it then; whereas, under other circumstances, they might have remained impenitent. But still, they were really converted. Though it was a mistake which stimulated them to action, the process they pursued was right, and the result pure. The mistake had no other influence in this regard than to prompt them to seek religion *then*; which done, they found peace in believing. But it afterward became identified with so many other heresies, it poisoned many who came under its influence, and interposed one of the greatest obstacles to the progress of religion that has ever been contrived. This we believe to be a just view of the subject in general. There were, doubtless, instances in which religion and Millerism were so combined, that, when the error of the latter was demonstrated, all confidence in the former was abandoned.

Under all these circumstances, it is not improbable that some improper measures were employed, or that others were carried to extremes, and operated to produce more chaff than wheat. But, notwithstanding, there was much wheat gathered. It is true many fell away, but not a larger proportion, we think, than is usual. When it is said that the Methodist Episcopal Church suffered a net decrease of more

than *fifty thousand* members between the years 1844 and 1847, it should be remembered that in 1843 her net *increase* was 154,634; and the year following, 102,831, making a net *increase* in two years of 257,465 members, thus exceeding all precedent by tens of thousands. The ordinary ratio of apostasies, therefore, accounts for an appalling decrease, without disparaging the character of the work in the least.

But other items come into this account that are important to the calculation. During this time there was a vigorous effort made by come-outers of different classes to break down the Churches, and scatter them to the four winds. While the revival was in progress, their influence was partly counteracted; but as the excitement abated, they became more successful. This, taken in connection with the fact that there was scarcely a revival in the country, and that thousands of Church members die annually, goes far to explain the decrease conceded, and leaves little to charge to the mismanagement of the revival under consideration; and especially if it be remembered that many of the converts were treated by certain ministers and laymen more as dupes or hypocrites than as the lambs of Christ's flock.

But some, we are aware, took other views of the subject, and, we fear, so far fell out with God's method of converting sinners that they did but little good. It is certain they never made many genuine converts by preaching against *excitement* and ridiculing revival measures. Some ran so low, their Churches became so sleepy and cold, and their congregations so thin, they were about willing to let the Lord work in any way, and by whomsoever he would.

While revivals were operating to sustain and consolidate the Church, the questions of slavery and abolition were agitating it, and threatening its very existence. Growing out of this agitation was another question of little less interest or danger; we refer to what was known as the question

OF CONFERENCE RIGHTS.

Prior to this time bishops had been regarded as chairmen in annual conferences, not merely to attend to the few items of business specified in the Discipline, but any other business connected therewith. It had been customary from the beginning for annual conferences to give expression to their sentiments on all moral questions without episcopal let or hinderance. But in bringing forward resolutions against slavery, an evil denounced by the Church from the beginning, the bishops refused to entertain them, on the ground that they were not legitimate "conference business." Certain presiding elders took the same position in their quarterly conferences. Rev. Daniel Dorchester, of the New England Conference, did so, and even adjourned a conference at Westfield without a vote, and against the remonstrances of the members. The next annual conference tried and convicted him of maladministration. From this decision he appealed to the General Conference of 1840, which reversed the decision, virtually justifying his course. It also approved of the administration of the bishops, forbidding antislavery action, thus leaving the annual conferences without the *right* of acting on any subject whatever outside of the twenty-three questions proposed in the Discipline. (See ¶ 105.) This was

true, also, of the quarterly conferences; they were restricted to the business prescribed for them. And, worse still, presiding elders were authorized to close any session at their discretion without a vote of the body; and the bishop to adjourn an annual conference after one week.

Abolitionists contended earnestly against these assumptions of episcopal authority, and conquered, practically, so that they were allowed to oppose slavery by conference action; and, in 1872, the rule authorizing bishops and presiding elders to adjourn conferences was ordered to be stricken out of the book, though they may still refuse to put a motion on any subject which, in their opinion, does not relate to the proper business of the conference.

Whether this is the right ground for the Church to occupy is worthy of consideration. If bishops are a higher order of ministers, appointed by God himself to govern other ministers and the people, as claimed by Romanists, then the conferences ought to obey them in all things. But if they are not higher in order, and are only officers, as our Church claims, it seems hardly reasonable to assume that they are wiser and safer and more loyal than a conference of two or three hundred ministers, over whom they may happen to preside. While we are compelled to concede that our Church has been very fortunate in the selection of men for this office, they have never proved themselves infallible. Many of our grandest achievements have been projected and carried through in opposition to their opinions. And it can not be otherwise, so long as they are human. To give them the power, therefore, to block all proceedings,

except in the few items named, seems to be quite unreasonable. Nor have we any evidence that the presiding elders are so much superior to the bodies over which they preside that it is necessary to give them overruling authority, as was done in the case named.

We refer to these matters as an important part of our history during the period under consideration. The assumption of episcopal authority contributed nearly as much toward the secession of abolitionists as slavery itself. In disgust with these high claims, they entirely repudiated episcopacy, and ran to the extreme of democracy. Methodism should occupy the middle ground, giving each department its proper functions, with ample authority to execute them, and holding each responsible to some supervisory jurisdiction. The "one-man government" is a dangerous one, whether in Church or State. The tendency of power is to multiply. History admonishes us to be cautious. "A nation," says the immortal Montesquieu, "may lose its liberties in a day, and not miss them in a century." "It is against silent and slow attacks that a nation should be particularly on its guard." Popery was once as pious and harmless as Methodism is to-day, and had it remained so, Methodism would never have been needed. In running after power it apostatized, and became the "man of sin," and is a beacon of warning to all other Churches.

OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1844.

This body convened in Greene Street Church, New York, Bishops Soule, Hedding, Andrew, Waugh, and Morris being present. In referring to

Bishop Roberts, who had lately deceased, they said: "In the character of this faithful servant of Christ and the Church, the attributes of a primitive Christian bishop were developed in an eminent degree.

He traveled and preached the Gospel for more than forty years; and for almost twenty-seven years he discharged the arduous duties of a general superintendent.

In the amiableness of his spirit, the humility of his mind, the courtesy of his manners, the kindness of his words and actions, and in the spirituality and power of his ministry, there is a sweet savor, which will embalm him in the memory of the ministers and people of his charge."

The death of Bishop Roberts, and the rapid extension of the work, rendered it necessary to increase the episcopal force, whereupon Revs. Leonidas L. Hamline and Edmund S. Janes were elected to that office. The former was born in Burlington, Connecticut, May 10, 1797, where he early joined the Congregational Church, supposing himself to be a Christian, which he afterward found to be a mistake. His early leanings were toward the ministry, but he changed his mind, and was admitted to the bar at Lancaster, Ohio, in 1827. The following year he became particularly interested in the welfare of his soul, and, by the aid of some Methodist friends, found peace in believing. He was soon after licensed to preach, and joined the Ohio Conference in the Autumn of 1832. In 1835 he was stationed in Cincinnati, where he became assistant editor of the *Western Christian Advocate*, in the place of Rev. W Phillips, deceased. He was bishop eight years,

in poor health much of the time, when he resigned the office, and returned to the ranks of the Ohio Conference, superannuated. He was a very devout man, an able writer and preacher, and generally beloved. He closed his suffering, yet happy life, at Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, February 22, 1865.

Bishop Janes was born in Sheffield, Massachusetts, trained at Salisbury, Connecticut; joined the Philadelphia Conference in 1830; was appointed Financial Secretary of the American Bible Society in 1841; and elected bishop in 1844, to which he has devoted his heart and life ever since, with unabated interest, and is still at work, generally known, and highly esteemed.

THE POWERS OF THE BISHOPS DEFINED.

We have already referred to some complaints with regard to the administration of the bishops, indicated by petitions to the General Conference four years before, asking for a "moderate episcopacy." The bishops, in their address to the General Conference of 1844, desiring to allay any fears that might exist on that point, defined their position and powers in so just a manner, and so contrary to sentiments afterward assumed by certain Southern delegates, and latterly by some Northern preachers, that we deem it appropriate to quote their words. They say: "Without entering minutely into the details of what is involved in the superintendency, it is sufficient for our present design to notice its several departments. 1. Confirming orders by ordaining deacons and elders. We say confirming, because the orders are conferred by another body, which is independent of the episcopal office, both in its organiza-

tion and action. This confirmation of orders, or ordination, is not by virtue of a distinct and higher *order*; for, with our great founder, we are convinced that bishops and presbyters are the same order in the Christian ministry. And this has been the sentiment of the Wesleyan Methodists from the beginning. But it is by virtue of an *office* constituted by the body of presbyters for the better order of discipline." (See Journal, pp. 154, 155.)

NEW RESTRICTIONS ON THE ITINERANCY.

The bishops had been practicing for several years under a rule made by themselves disallowing a minister to remain more than four years in succession in the same city. If held subordinate to the calls of Divine Providence, it was not unreasonable, as in those days, four years was generally long enough; but as a rule from which there could be no deviation whatever, it allowed them to follow Providence to the extent of four years, but no further. And to render it still more unreasonable and disastrous, it was added, that a minister having been in a city four years, should not return to it till he had been absent six years.

Another Episcopal rule, in keeping with this, was, that a preacher should not remain in the same station more than two years in six. These rules saved the bishops the trouble of inquiring into the will of God, or the best interest of the cause in the cases involved; but that they sometimes came sadly in collision with both is as demonstrable as any thing of the kind can be. Still, on the recommendation of the bishops, these rules were adopted by the General Conference, and inserted in the Discipline, where they remained

a few years and were then superseded by the present arrangement, restricting the continuance of a preacher to the same appointment to three years in six. But this rule, allowing of no exception in the ordinary work, is open to the same objection, though less liable to prove hurtful to the cause than the former.

THE GROUND ASSUMED.

The ground assumed by the opponents of these rules was, that, however desirable it might be for bishops to have some general understanding among themselves as to the proper policy to be pursued in particular cases not settled by the Discipline, the less they should commit themselves to do or not to do in matters of expediency before ascertaining all the facts bearing on the case, the better. And the same was thought to be true of the General Conference. It may safely make rules providing for deviations under peculiar circumstances, with entire respect to Divine Providence, and the welfare of the cause; but to bind the bishops rigidly to a set of rules, and allow them no discretion or deviation, under any circumstances whatsoever, shows very great want of confidence in them or in God. Their idea was to make the rules, but to provide for deviations, as in the case of agents for literary institutions, etc., who can only be appointed by a bishop, when requested by an annual conference. (See Discipline, ¶ 219.) It was on this principle that the writer opposed the extension of the term to three years. He believed that two years were generally sufficient, and that where a longer term was necessary, there would be good sense and piety

enough in the bishop and conference to grant it. But the majority decided to make the term *three* years, and allow no man to remain a minute longer, however loudly Providence might call for the fourth. The result is, some desire to stay three years who really ought to remain but one, and the call in a very few cases is louder and more emphatic for the *fourth* year than it was for the first or the third, but there is no administrative power on earth to grant it.

This is thought to be inconsistent, 1. Because, as a Church, we claim to be especially led by Providence. 2. Because that we pray to be so led, whereas we have already determined not to follow Providence beyond *three* years, however loudly it may call. While it may not often be desirable to go beyond this limit, the bishops, in concurrence with the conference, should have authority to do so in great emergencies. Of course, this would require investigation and decision, where now the rule excludes both. If the General Conference were to make a rule appointing the presiding elders by seniority of service, and the preachers in regular rotation, without regard to adaptation, it would relieve them altogether; they would hardly be needed. But that would be folly. Are not the inflexible rules objected to liable to a similar charge?

The itinerancy is the stamped feature of Methodism, to which it is largely indebted for its success, and it must be maintained. We would make no suggestion looking toward its overthrow. Any rule that holds a man to a position the second or third year, who clearly ought to vacate at the close of the first, is an error. But it does happen in the

course of time, that the very man whom Providence requires to leave one place at the close of the *first* year, is required to continue the fourth in another place by the same high authority. May not the Church safely provide for following Providence in the latter case, as well as the former? We think so. But the General Conference seems to have been strangely averse to it. Formerly, some bishops would allow a preacher to remain an extra year as supernumerary, and this relieved the difficulty. (See South Fifth-street, Minutes, 1858. New York East Conference.) But somebody became alarmed for the itinerancy, and procured the enactment of a rule prohibiting even this. (See Dis. ¶ 295.)

Thus our bishops are now so hedged about that they can not appoint a man an extra year if it were to save the universe, showing a mortifying distrust not of bishops only, but of the whole Church. However, the writer is not tenacious. He ventures these suggestions for what they may be worth. God is good enough to overrule our errors, and will probably do so in this case. But a majority may take other views, and maintain our long continued course.

CHAPTER X.

SLAVERY—ITS EARLY TREATMENT—SUSPENSION OF HOSTILITIES—ABOLITIONISM AND THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1836, ETC.

NO history of Methodism can be true to the subject, which does not indicate something further of its relations to negro slavery. Now that it is abolished both in England and America, the two grand centers of Methodism, many are quite willing to claim the honor of the noble achievement who are known to have opposed it to the last, while some take more credit than belongs to them, and ignore others who acted a more influential part.

This remark is fully justified by the four or five histories of emancipation which have been and are now being published. They almost entirely overlook the agency of Methodism—in some cases, probably, from prejudice, and in others from ignorance. The several authors wrote from their respective standpoints, neither of which was favorable to a proper appreciation of the part which the Church acted in the long and tedious conflict. In saying this, we are by no means so blind to its defects as to believe that its course was always right, or the most favorable to the final result. This can not be predicated of any Church or association in the country. Even the Quakers, who were for a while more distinguished

for opposition to slavery, perhaps, than any other religious society, once tolerated slave-holding among their members. But we are quite satisfied that the Methodist Episcopal Church, with all her defects, did contribute more toward the wonderful consummation than is generally attributed to her. Let us glance at the facts, good and bad, and see how far they justify this opinion.

MR. WESLEY'S POSITION.

Mr. Wesley's hostility to slavery, in all its moods and tenses, is not generally understood. When in Georgia and South Carolina, in 1736, he was deeply affected with the heathenish condition of the slaves, but, returning home soon, was unable to do much for them; but, twenty years after, he corresponded with Rev. Samuel Davis, a Presbyterian, of Virginia, and sent him a present of books for their benefit. About that time, a Mr. Gilbert, of Antigua, speaker of the House of Assembly, visited England, accompanied by four of his slaves, where he heard Mr. Wesley preach, and was converted December 29, 1758. Mr. Wesley baptized two of the slaves. They laid the foundation of the Wesleyan missions, which did much to prepare the slaves of the West Indies for emancipation.

In 1774, he published a large pamphlet, entitled, "Thoughts upon Slavery," one of the most elaborate and able works on the subject in the English language. It exerted a powerful influence on the public conscience, and contributed largely, we have no doubt, to multiply the petitions which began, ten years after, to flow into Parliament against the slave-

trade. It was sent out in every direction with his preachers, and was widely scattered by them both in Europe and America. How much he inspired Mr. Clarkson, who was the very soul of the antislavery movement in England, we can not say; but it is certain that he gave him his most hearty approval. In one of his letters to him, he said: "Go on, in the name of God and in the power of his might, till even American slavery (the vilest that ever saw the sun) shall vanish away before it." Prior to this, he had taken a lively interest in the bills which were proposed to Parliament by Messrs. Pitt, Wilberforce, and others, and which finally resulted not only in the abolition of the slave-trade, but in the overthrow of slavery itself throughout the British dominions.

THE ATTITUDE OF EARLY METHODISTS IN AMERICA.

Wesley's followers naturally sympathized with his antislavery views, so that when some of them came to America as missionaries, they were in no mood to tolerate the system of slavery, which they found there on every side. They began at once to preach and talk privately against it. For a while they made considerable headway. At a conference of the preachers, in 1780, the matter was introduced and decided thus: "Does the conference acknowledge that slavery is contrary to the laws of God, man, and nature, and hurtful to society, contrary to the dictates of conscience and pure religion, and doing that which we would not others should do to us and ours? Do we pass our disapprobation upon all our friends who keep slaves, and advise their freedom? *Answer.* Yes."

Four years after, at which time the Church was duly organized, the conference prohibited "the buying or selling the bodies and souls of men, women, or children with an intention to enslave them," thus striking boldly at the slave-trade and excluding it from the Church. It also made provision for expelling all members who would not manumit their slaves, pronouncing slavery "contrary to the golden law of God, the inalienable rights of mankind, as well as every principle of the Revolution."

But the abomination was too deeply rooted in the cupidity of the people to be easily eradicated. It was *profitable*, and becoming more and more so every year, especially in the South. The Northern States had seen the evil, and were working out of it. Massachusetts adopted a bill of rights in 1780, and New Hampshire a Constitution about that time, which made them both free by judicial interpretation. The others followed with immediate or gradual emancipation, but not without intense and persistent antislavery work.

Young Methodism did its part in these movements, according to its little strength and influence. It made many rules, from time to time, to restrain its preachers and members from participating in the great evil; but still it grew and prevailed. Both traveling and local preachers became entangled in it to such an extent that all attempts to effect emancipation seemed useless.

A TURN IN THE TIDE.

Here the tide gradually turned, and a new style of legislation was adopted, for reasons which can be

easily imagined. In 1804, preachers were required to admonish all slaves to render due respect and obedience to their respective masters; and, four years later, all that related to slave-holding among private members was struck out of the Discipline, and annual conferences were authorized to make their own regulations relative to buying and selling slaves. This was done to throw off responsibility, and let the conferences concerned manage the troublesome question to suit themselves. (Stevens's History, Vol. IX, p. 454.)

It was reaffirmed in 1812, and rescinded in 1820, and, in 1824, instructions were added with regard to the treatment of slaves, their emancipation appearing to be impossible. After this, for several years, the General Conference said little on the subject; but the Southern conferences regularly drifted from original principles until they came to regard slavery as just and right, as may be seen from the action of the Georgia Conference of 1837, in these words:

"Whereas, there is a clause in the Discipline of our Church which states that we are as much as ever convinced of the great evil of slavery; and *whereas*, the said clause has been perverted by some and used in such a manner as to produce the impression that the Methodist Episcopal Church believed slavery to be a moral evil; therefore,

"Resolved, That it is the sense of the Georgia Annual Conference that slavery, as it exists in the United States, is not a moral evil."

Looking at this declaration, to which we never heard a demur from the extreme Southern conferences, in connection with the denunciations of slavery

proclaimed by the fathers of the Church, one may be surprised at the wonderful apostasy which it indicates; but the same great change transpired in all classes of society, and in all parts of the country. The North even, after abolishing slavery as a sin and blot upon a free government, came to indorse and defend it with almost as much vehemence as the slave-holders themselves, as will be seen when we come to speak of slavery and abolition. Though few citizens of the free States owned slaves, the whole community was interested in the products of their labor. Cotton, rice, sugar, tobacco, etc., were staple articles of commerce, which the free States needed and could get in exchange for food, clothing, and various kinds of costly furniture, in great demand with slave-holders.

Besides, these gentlemen spent large sums of money North, during the Summer months, at our hotels and watering-places, and in the education of their children. There were other bonds of union between the two sections, created by intermarriages, Church, political, and other fellowships, to say nothing of personal esteem, which was very strong on both sides. The notable hospitality of slaveholders had endeared them to many a Northern heart. All these things combined to intrench slavery in public confidence; and, had the South managed their great advantage with more prudence, they might have retained their position to the present time.

ORIGINAL PRINCIPLES REAFFIRMED.

But the General Conference rallied, in 1860, and reiterated our old principles, saying, "We believe

that the buying, selling, or *holding* of human beings, to be used as chattels, is contrary to the laws of God and nature, and inconsistent with the golden rule," etc., and admonished our preachers and people "to seek its extirpation by all lawful and Christian means." Four years after, the *general rule* was changed to prohibit *slave-holding*, as well as buying or selling slaves.

The retrogression of the Church, however, to which we have referred, was not complete. The Discipline still retained much of its former antagonism to the system, and contemplated its overthrow, which, though partially inoperative for a time, became of the utmost importance to abolitionists afterward, when accused of disturbing the peace of the Church. The General Rules still prohibited "the buying and selling of men, women, and children with an intention of enslaving them," while the chapter on slavery proposed active measures for its abolishment.

This was the standing sentiment of the Church, officially published North and South from year to year, and had more or less to do with creating that state of things which produced emancipation. We have yet to know of another Church or association embracing the slave-holding States that took a stronger position. Besides, the Church during all this time was pushing its evangelizing labors among the slaves, and thus preparing them for liberty.

THE SUBJECT STILL ALIVE.

This quiet, however, in the General Conference did not put the subject to rest either in the Church

or out of it. Slave-holders never failed to be present in Congress with some new demand, or to find parties of opponents scattered about the country, who were not wanting in zeal or courage to denounce them. It was impossible to keep the subject down. Slaves would run away and must be caught. This often created no little excitement. The fact that the land of the free should be the hunting-ground of oppressors was, to say the least, extremely mortifying. Besides, the free negroes were multiplying by one means and another, and certain slaves were getting to know more, and becoming less valuable, and there was no possible way to get rid of them. These circumstances taxed the wisdom of the South exceedingly. At length, a semi-religious thought occurred to some one, who expanded it into a magnificent plan to remove the *free* negroes, who were regarded as a nuisance, and such slaves as their owners might feel disposed for one reason or another to manumit, in a benevolent way. After mature deliberation, though without fully comprehending all the bearings of the project, in 1816

THE COLONIZATION SOCIETY WAS ORGANIZED IN

the City of Washington, and pressed upon public attention as a Christian institution, designed to promote the welfare of the colored race. Auxiliaries were formed and agents appointed in all parts of the country. To the North it was represented as an anti-slavery missionary movement, calculated to undermine slavery and redeem Africa. With this understanding many Churches indorsed it, and took collections in its interest. The General Conference of

1824 considered the subject, but, for the want of information, did not commit itself further than to authorize the bishops to send missionaries to Africa under its auspices so soon as the funds would justify it. But four years after it highly approved its objects and measures, and recommended the ministry and membership to favor it, by collections and otherwise. It subsequently repeated the recommendation with much emphasis. This brought its claims before the whole Church, and with it the correlative question of slavery.

About this time, too, the society unsuspectingly solicited sermons to be preached by ministers generally on the *Fourth of July*, and collections to be taken for the promotion of its objects. Many responded favorably, printed their sermons, and sent them broadcast by mail, not overlooking the Southern States, to which the society properly belonged. But they were so full of *liberty to the captives* that they created a terrible excitement. Dr. Capers was led to doubt, on reading these stirring productions, whether he was in favor of the society or not, and said, in a letter to Dr. Bangs, editor of *The Christian Advocate*, that if "he had been the author and distributor of them, and had been compelled to suffer death for it, he might not have called the punishment a persecution." He thought the managers should have known better than to have issued such an invitation, and he pronounced it a "*miscarriage*."

But the society did not take *well* with antislavery men. To their apprehension it was a suspicious affair, and they soon denounced it as a pro-slavery movement. In support of this opinion they urged

that Judge Bushrod, its first president, and nearly all its managers, were slave-holders, and that twelve of its seventeen vice-presidents were Southern men. Besides, it originated in the South, and claimed Southern support on the ground that it "must materially tend to secure the property of every master in the United States in his slaves." And what placed this point beyond question with the people was its bitter hostility to antislavery measures. But still many wise men thought they saw good in it, and gave it their cordial support. -

We have not room to repeat the arguments on either side. Who was right or wrong is of no account now. Nothing can be more certain than that the Colonization Society originated in the South, and was intended to fortify slavery, and increase the value of slave property. But instead of doing so, it inaugurated a discussion through the free States that produced emancipation—showing that God sometimes leads men and nations in ways that they do not understand.

ANTISLAVERY SOCIETIES ORGANIZED.

A few men, like Elias Hicks, Benjamin Lundy, and William Lloyd Garrison, were so impressed with the wrongs of slavery that they were ready to seize upon every opportunity to assail it, and took advantage of this opening to herald their views in every direction. Others soon joined them, and the controversy waxed warm, and led to the formation of the "New England Antislavery Society" in 1832, in Boston.

At its first anniversary it initiated measures for

the calling of a convention to form a *National Society* of similar character, which resulted in the organization of the "American Antislavery Society," at Philadelphia, in December, 1833. In the mean time *The Liberator* and other antislavery papers had been started, and were attracting much attention. These things greatly disturbed the South. The Legislature of Georgia offered a reward of five thousand dollars for the arrest of the editor of the *Liberator*, and other similar methods were adopted in the slave States for the arrest of any body who should be found circulating "incendiary" sentiments. Our missions to the slaves were badly threatened and interrupted. Bishops and editors were greatly alarmed, and, in common with other denominations, made haste to resist the coming tide, and our official papers opened upon "*abolitionism*" in good earnest.

ORIGIN OF METHODIST ABOLITIONISM.

But it was too much to expect common Methodist preachers to stand still under these circumstances and do nothing. "What shall we do for the extirpation of the evil of slavery?" had been ringing in their ears ever since they first read the Discipline. The British Parliament was just then striking off the last fetter from its West Indian subjects, and Providence seemed to be calling upon Christians for vigorous action. Revs. Orange Scott and La Roy Sunderland, of the New England Conference, Rev. George Storrs, of the New Hampshire Conference, and some others, heard the call, and entered the field with pen and voice, and did efficient service. When Dr. Fisk offered the usual resolutions in favor

of the Colonization Society in the New England Conference in 1834, Mr. Scott moved to lay them on the table where they still sleep. At the opening of the following year, from December 30, 1834, to March 20, 1835, he published a series of sixteen articles in *Zion's Herald*, detailing the horrors of slavery and the duty of immediate emancipation. Mr. Sunderland wrote an "appeal" on the subject, which was published in an extra of the same paper February 4, 1835, signed by Shipley Willson, Abram D. Merrill, La Roy Sunderland, George Storrs, and Gared Perkins.

These documents, with others, took effect. Many believed the doctrines set forth, and committed themselves to the antislavery cause. Others, good and true men, resisted the movement with great power of argument and influence. Mr. Sunderland's "appeal" was met with a "counter appeal," which appeared in another extra of *Zion's Herald*, April 8, 1835, signed by nine of our leading ministers. It did not assume to defend slavery outright, but claimed that Christians were justified in holding slaves under certain circumstances, and that abolitionism was wrong, and dangerous to every interest involved, civil, ecclesiastical, and religious. Thus the controversy was fully inaugurated in the Church, ministers and people taking position on one side or the other with more or less zeal and activity. New writers and speakers came to the front almost every week. Conventions, addresses, resolutions, hard speeches, and mobs were the order of the day, and the outlook was threatening; but the cause advanced rapidly.

THE NEW ENGLAND CONFERENCE LEADS OFF.

The next New England Conference met in Lynn, Massachusetts, June 3, 1835, when it was found that a majority of the members were ready to take specific action. They accordingly organized for the purpose, under the title of the "New England Wesleyan Antislavery Society," and made arrangements to circulate Wesley's "Thoughts on Slavery," and other documents; and appointed a committee to write an address to the members of the Church within the bounds of the conference, and publish it in *Zion's Herald*, which was done in due time.

The events, however, which created the most excitement, grew out of the election of delegates to the General Conference, which was to convene the following May, in Cincinnati, Ohio. Dr. Fisk had been the leading man of the conference for some years, and naturally expected that he would command the largest number of votes; but the ballot placed Mr. Scott at the head, the doctor next, supported by five abolitionists in the rear. Averse to abolition as Dr. Fisk really and honestly was, the situation did not please him, and he declined to serve; whereupon, an abolitionist was elected in his place. This was all proper enough. Conferences are free to vote for whom they please; and good men are often disappointed to find themselves behind others, and have been known to decline important positions, but not often. And it would have created no disturbance, had the matter been let alone by outsiders, who had no official connection with it. But certain New York brethren seemed to feel about that time that the

whole Church was pretty much in their charge, and hastened to write a letter of condolence and congratulation to Dr. Fisk, approving of his declination to be a delegate, and wasting no compliments on the conference. This letter, with Dr. Fisk's reply, was published in *The Christian Advocate*, September 4, 1835, and elicited a protest, signed by some forty-three members of the New England Conference, which was published in *Zion's Herald* (for abolitionists had no rights in our official papers, not even to deny any thing that might be said against them). The protest charged that the letter was an unjustifiable interference with the concerns of the New England Conference, designed to forestall the influence of the delegates in the next General Conference. The injustice of this, and other similar proceedings, did more to make our preachers abolitionists than the lectures of Thompson, Garrison, and the whole party put together. Thus, slave-holders started the abolition discussion by their colonization scheme, and their apologists fanned it into a flame by imprudent and unjust efforts to suppress it.

Dr. Elliott, whose hostility to abolition amounted to unmitigated hatred, and tainted, yea, totally invalidated much of his mammoth volume on Secession, says of this unfortunate affair:

“The course of the New York preachers and laymen who signed the congratulation to Dr. Fisk, was extraordinary. It was unjust, and inflicted a great injury. The New England Conference is assaulted as a set of serviles, and not high even in that grade. They are published as such to the world, and they can have no space in the columns of the

paper which defamed them to utter their protest against such unjust measures. Among all the publications we have read since the abolition excitement in 1833, we have seen nothing so extraordinary and so much astray as this same paper, which so unsparingly denounced the New England Conference." (Great Secession, p. 125.)

THE NEW HAMPSHIRE CONFERENCE

met soon after, July 29, 1835, and organized "The Wesleyan Antislavery Society" for their own convenience in circulating information—taking the popular antislavery ground of the day; namely, slavery, sin *per se*, and immediate abolition, the *right* of the slave and the *duty* of the master. It proposed and introduced a report which the bishop declined to entertain; whereupon, the conference went into a committee of the whole, and adopted it. It was published in the *Herald*, September 30, but never, of course, in *The Christian Advocate*. But *The Christian Advocate* assailed both *it* and the conference, in terms which we forbear to repeat, and refused to publish any reply.

These circumstances necessitated other measures, to which we shall allude hereafter.

ADDRESSES OF BISHOPS HEDDING, EMORY, AND DR. FISK.

The next important event that transpired was an Address to the ministers and members of the New England and New Hampshire Conferences by Bishops Hedding and Emory, published September 10th, expressing their solicitude on account of the painful excitement on the subject of "immediate abolition."

It assumed that the trouble was limited to those two conferences, and that many of the preachers, and a majority of the people, were opposed to the movement, as was the Church generally; that it was doing great damage to our missionary work among the slaves, and, indeed, would be likely to divide the Church and the country if continued. They entreated them, therefore, to desist. The address manifested a kind spirit, but it was heretical in sentiment and policy, according to the antislavery standards of New England, and gave no perceptible check to the agitation.

Dr. Fisk, being about to embark for Europe, published a farewell address to his New England friends, taking the same ground on the subject the bishops had done; but it, also, utterly failed of its object. The fact is, abolition was a religious sentiment, deeply imbedded in the hearts of the preachers and the people who advocated it. They knew that holding and treating their fellow-beings and members of the Church as *property* was sin, if there was any such thing as sin in the universe, and that the way to kill it was to expose its enormity. It cost them a great deal to take the stand they did, against the remonstrances of their best friends, and in the face of powerful enemies, backed by public opinion. They loved the bishops and Dr. Fisk, and were sorry to afflict them, but felt compelled to follow their honest convictions.

INJUSTICE TO ABOLITIONISTS.

The *injustice* with which they were treated was directly calculated to make them persistent, if not

severe. They seemed to have no rights which others were bound to respect. Shut out of the Church papers, and disallowed to remonstrate against slavery in their conferences, while slave-holders and their apologists had free access to the papers, and perfect liberty in their conferences to denounce abolition, they would have been unworthy of respect if they had *not* been indignant and stood up for their rights. This same year, August 20, 1835, they were assailed in the *Western Christian Advocate* by fourteen Baltimore preachers, and treated to a rehash of the common pro-slavery complaints and prophecies of the day. Four days after, the Ohio Conference adopted a report without let or hinderance, avowing just such antislavery sentiments as were current in the South, berating abolitionists, and indorsing the Colonization Society. The same month, the Kentucky Conference adopted a similar report, though less pro-slavery, declaring that the course of the abolitionists "should be looked upon as an unwarrantable assumption of claim, and an abuse of the rights of citizenship;" but it commended colonization in the highest manner.

The Tennessee Conference followed suit by a string of resolutions, reiterating Southern sentiments, condemning abolitionists, approving colonization, the course of Bishops Hedding and Emory, the action of the Maine, Ohio, and Kentucky Conferences, and the efforts of Dr. Fisk; and all went into the official papers.

While these things were going on in the Church, they were heartily responded to from without, in similar utterances, mobs, and declarations of opposing sentiment. The Governor of South Carolina

demanded the delivery of Arthur Tappan, of the city of New York, to be judged, and, of course, hanged, by the laws of the Palmetto State. Governor M'Duffie declared that "domestic slavery, instead of being a political evil, is the corner-stone of our republican edifice."

ZION'S WATCHMAN STARTED.

Failing to see themselves the miscreants they were represented to be, the "New York Wesleyan Society" issued *Zion's Watchman*, January 1, 1836, with La Roy Sunderland as editor, that they might make some sort of a defense. Mr. Sunderland was a very able writer, and annoyed his neighbor of the *Advocate*, Dr. Bangs, exceedingly, who arraigned him before the New England Conference three or four times, but found him a hard man to handle. Mr. Sunderland's defenses were wonderful specimens of forensic power, such as we have never heard excelled in any court or conference since.

The year 1836 renewed the dispensation of resolutions. Baltimore Conference resolved itself "opposed in every part and particular to the proceedings of the abolitionists." The New York Conference resolved to "disapprove of its members patronizing, or in any way giving countenance to, a paper called *Zion's Watchman*," and that it was "decidedly of the opinion that none ought to be elected to the office of deacon or elder unless he give a pledge to the conference that he will refrain from agitating the Church with discussions on the subject of abolition." An antislavery report was presented to the New England Conference near its close, says Dr. Elliott,

but "out of regard to the feelings of a minority it was withdrawn," though a majority would have voted for it had it come to a decision—a magnanimity only excelled by that same majority the year before in electing Dr. Fisk a delegate, knowing him to be opposed to them, and never, to our knowledge, imitated by their opponents.

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1836.

The General Conference held at Cincinnati, Ohio, however, was the great denominational event of this year. With so many anti-abolition resolutions adopted by the conservative conferences to keep down excitement, it was not unreasonable to expect a pretty warm time. The second day of the session brought the subject of slavery upon the tapis in an address from the British Conference, which was so outspoken the conference would not publish it in the usual way. Besides, many antislavery petitions were presented, one signed by 200 preachers, and another by 2,284 members, mostly from New England. These were duly referred, and met the fate anticipated, without creating much excitement.

But Rev George Storrs and Samuel Norris, from New Hampshire, exercising the common rights and privileges of ministers and citizens, had the impertinence to attend an antislavery meeting in the city, and make addresses looking toward the extirpation of the "great evil" denounced by their Discipline. But this was no business of the General Conference. Had they stolen a man, that conference had no right to try them; they were amenable to the New Hampshire Conference alone. But *might* was *right* in

those days, and will always control where slavery and kindred crimes are in the ascendant; so the conference, under the lead of Baltimore, hastened to express its judgment of the case in the following condemnatory resolutions:

“*Resolved*, 1. By the delegates of the annual conferences in General Conference assembled, That they disapprove in the most unqualified sense the conduct of the two members of the General Conference who are reported to have lectured in this city recently upon and in favor of modern abolitionism.

“2. That they are decidedly opposed to modern abolitionism, and wholly disclaim any right, wish, or intention to interfere in the civil and political relation between master and slave, as it exists in the slave-holding States of this Union.” (Journal, p. 447.)

The first was adopted by a vote of 122 to 11, and the last, being divided, by a vote, on the first part, of 120 to 14, and the last by a vote of 137, without opposition. This naturally brought forth a protest, signed by the immortal fourteen; and published in pamphlet form for circulation among the members of the conference, as an “Address to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, by a member of that body;” but it was not allowed to go upon the journals, and was denounced as “false, and an outrage on the dignity of the body, meriting unqualified reprehension.” How good men could do so foolish a thing seems unaccountable, but they did not understand themselves or the purposes of Providence. The resolutions went forth and added fuel to the fire they were intended to quench. The abuse of minorities never pays.

NO SOUTHERN BISHOP ELECTED.

After pleasing the South to such an unreasonable extent, it seemed unlikely that there would be a demur at any thing it might demand. But, innocent as slave-holding ministers were assumed to be in their peculiar circumstances, it had never been deemed expedient to elect one to the episcopacy, and three new bishops were needed. The South had high hopes of breaking down this old prejudice, and placing a slave-holder in the highest office of the Church, and were greatly disappointed to find, on counting the votes, that Messrs. Waugh, Fisk, and Morris, three non-slave-holders were elected. This provoked Southern leaders more than abolitionism had done, and measures were immediately adopted by William A. Smith and others to create a sentiment South that should demand a slave-holding bishop, or the division of that very Church whose peace had been an object of so much solicitude.

The conference having adjourned, the bishops and delegates returned to their respective fields, to carry out its expressed judgment and will. Accordingly, Bishop Hedding removed Mr. Scott from the presiding eldership; but abolitionists went on much as before, improving such opportunities as were left to them. And it is well they did, though they have never been forgiven, and never will be by some of their old opponents. But they conquered, and redeemed the Church from the deep degradation into which it had drifted. Though slavery is abolished, its spirit still lingers, and, if not carefully watched, may lead to other dangerous complications. The

ownership of men, soul, body, and spirit, is its fullest and worst development. The oppression of them by personal violence, or party tyranny, is no better in principle, and may torment them within the law. The lash of a majority in the shape of an unjust resolution, is the same in nature as that of the raw-hide on the bare back of its helpless victim. To respect manhood and to be just, though the heavens fall, are rare virtues.

CHAPTER XI.

ANTISLAVERY CONVENTIONS—LEADERS ARRAIGNED—PACIFICATION—SECESSIONAL INDICATIONS—GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1840—SECESSION COMPLETED—GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1844—SOUTHERN SEPARATION OPPOSED—MORAL INFLUENCE OF CONFLICTING AGENCIES, ETC.

WE closed the last chapter with some account of the General Conference of 1836, which really intended to suppress the abolition agitation. How far it succeeded will be seen in the following statements:

The New England Conference met, in 1837, at Nantucket, anticipating that the bishops would refuse to put any motion involving slavery and abolition. To be prepared for the emergency, the abolitionists had a meeting the day before, and determined that, unless they should have the privilege of presenting their memorials, and referring them in the usual way, they would block all business, and adjourn from time time, until their demands were acceded to; and informed Bishop Vaugh of their purpose. But he wrote them a kind letter, proposing to allow them to adopt a respectful petition to the next General Conference, and sheltered himself under the action of the late General Conference. The abolitionists did not accept the compromise proposed, or yield the principle; but, being Methodists, and concilia-

tory at that, and having faith in God and the justness of their cause, they receded from their purpose, and adopted a strong antislavery report in their society, and published it in *Zion's Herald*. The New Hampshire Conference pursued a similar course, with the same results. Other conferences became alarmed about the new doctrine of "conference rights," which was liable to hit somebody else by and by, and cause trouble on other questions. But the conservative conferences kept up the agitation, still claiming that slavery was a political question, with which they had nothing to do.

ANTISLAVERY CONVENTIONS.

Being silenced in the conferences, but not discouraged, the abolitionists took themselves to *conventions*. The first was held at Cazenovia, New York, showing that the reform was working westward. August 16th, a *lay* convention was held, growing out of the one at Cazenovia, which took decided action as to the course of the bishops. Another convened at Lynn, Massachusetts, October 25th, and issued a declaration of sentiments, and a long report on "Conference Rights," which gave official editors business for months. The famous Convention at Utica, New York, was also held this year, August 2d, 3d, and became the innocent occasion of trouble to Revs. James Floy and C. K. True, who participated in its proceedings. They were called to account by the New York Conference, and laid under embargo—much to their annoyance, to say the least—but they both survived to overpower their opponents and take an active part in the movement without danger.

to their ecclesiastical standing. Several other ministers were present, who afterward joined the pro-slavery party, one of whom became a Southern D. D., a slave-holder, and a rebel, and finally found a home in *the Church* which is supported by some of its admirers because it never meddles either with politics or religion. A similar convention was also held in Lowell, Massachusetts, which made no little stir. The death of Mr. Lovejoy, an able Congregational minister, by a mob at Alton, Illinois, added new fuel to the flame, and made thousands of converts. The proposition to annex Texas to the Union aroused politicians to see the destiny to which the nation was drifting. The general controversy was lively, in which Sunderland, Scott, Horton, Bangs, Fisk, and many others, were prominent.

TWO OF THE LEADERS ARRAIGNED.

The year 1838 was remarkable for several important events. Mr. Scott issued the first number of *The Wesleyan Quarterly Review*, embracing a solemn appeal to the Methodist Episcopal Church, giving the substance of the whole controversy in the author's off-hand and forcible style, and handling his opponents with unusual severity. He was an effective preacher and writer, but in his hurry—for he seldom had time to revise his work—and stung by the multiplied suspicions and accusations of his opponents, which were very uncharitable, and the injustice of editors in refusing him any opportunity to reply to their abuse, he was imprudent, and implicated the motives of honest but misguided men. Bishop Hedding was much aggrieved, and arraigned

him at his conference, which sat in Bennett Street, Boston, June 6th, and made a stupendous effort to have him rebuked, at least. We never saw that grand old bishop tower higher than on that memorable occasion. The conference did not fully approve of Mr. Scott's course, nor would it disparage him much in view of all the circumstances. While the matter was still pending, some one proposed a private interview of the parties, to which they assented; and the bishop invited the writer to accompany him to the place of meeting, where the difficulty was honorably settled.

Mr. Sunderland was also arraigned by Bishop Hedding, and had another opportunity to say all that was in his heart—and he improved it to perfection. Mr. Sunderland escaped censure. But the conference itself was overhauled by the next General Conference, against all precedent, for acquitting these brethren, and would probably have been censured, if not expelled, but for the kind and prudent interposition of Bishop Hedding. These things did not humble the conference in the least; it felt an honest pride in its noble position, and maintained it.

But this trial taught Mr. Scott that the conference would not sustain him in imitating the severity of his opponents, and that he must be more careful. The conference continued about *seventeen* days. For, in addition to these two gigantic contests, another was foisted upon it, still more dangerous, in the shape of

“A PLAN OF PACIFICATION,”

designed to modify both sides a little, and improve the spirit of the controversy. The trouble with the

plan was, it got into the "wrong pew;" it properly belonged to the agitating conferences rather than to New England, which was forced to keep still by episcopal authority. Bishops Hedding and Soule, Drs. Fisk, Bangs, and the like, approved it—for New England—and it was referred to a committee, who did not agree; whereupon it was presented to the conference, and signed by a majority of the members. The minority regarded it as a yoke, to which they could not submit without proving recreant to the reform. It soon became a dead letter, though it created a warm discussion for a time.

The New Hampshire Conference had better fortune, meeting at Danville, July 4th. A respectable resolution vindictory of abolition being introduced, Bishop Morris decided it out of order, but said he would allow an appeal from his decision on certain specified conditions, which were acceded to, and the appeal was taken and sustained, when the resolution was adopted, eighty-one voting for it, and one against it. All were pleased; nobody fainted, and business proceeded in good order. This was the turn of a very damaging tide, raised by the bishops and the General Conference, and did more to tranquillize the agitation than all the addresses that ever came from the episcopal bench; but it was too late to arrest the coming secession, which had been provoked and nursed by the offensive administration, from which it was a palpable divergence.

OUTSIDE OPERATIONS.

The American Antislavery Society, with which many of our preachers were associated, as agents or

otherwise, made marked progress this year, reporting 340 new auxiliaries, twelve of which were State societies, making in all under its supervision, 1,346. It employed thirty-eight agents, printed a vast amount of matter, and sent petitions to the United States Senate, embracing 414,000 names, expending about \$44,000.

Our cause was helped at this time by the extreme pro-slavery action of the Southern conferences, showing that they fully indorsed the chief sin of the nation. Many Northern men who had pitied them with the understanding that they were opposed to slavery, and were only connected with it because they could not avoid it, lost all patience with them and took sides with abolitionists.

The controversy developed little that was new in 1839. Bishops and presiding elders had begun to see that it was not good policy to press the high prerogatives which had been accorded to them. Mr. Garrison and his intimate associates, composed largely of Quakers, infidels, and other enemies of orthodoxy, utterly maddened by national and Church pro-slavery action, began to denounce all denominations with more violence than their Christian coadjutors deemed expedient. They also brought their "woman's rights" and Quakerish peculiarities into the meetings, and objected to opening by prayer unless somebody was moved to do it without being invited. The Methodist Church was especially characterized as a nest of unclean birds, and a "brotherhood of thieves." No religious man would consent to listen to such unmeasured abuse, and the New England Conference Antislavery Society discarded them by

formal vote. They finally succeeded in driving off Church people generally, who organized other societies, to be conducted on Christian principles.

We refer to this as a matter of history, and not to disparage any one, especially Mr. Garrison, whom we always regarded as a very sincere man, of much force of character. However we differed with him at the time, it was all buried and forgotten in the noble stand he took during the Rebellion and afterward.

SECESSIONAL INDICATIONS.

At the opening of the year 1840 a new anti-slavery paper appeared in Lowell, Massachusetts, edited by Revs. J. Horton and O. Scott, called *The American Wesleyan Observer*. Its ostensible object was to publish the doings of the approaching General Conference, and it proposed to continue but six months. But its principal design was, probably, to discuss questions of Church polity, growing out of the antislavery controversy, in a more radical manner than would be allowed in *Zion's Herald*. Its course soon alienated many of its early friends, and left it to be supported by those who preferred secession to continued connection with a Church hopelessly involved in slavery.

Legacies of slaves to Churches and other Christian institutions being reported about that time, brought up the question whether we could innocently co-operate with slave-holders in our denominational benevolences, as we had done. Mr. Scott and some others thought not, and proposed the formation of a separate Missionary Society, to be managed by our-

selves. The writer and others opposed the measure, as necessarily leading to secession and a new Church. But Mr. Scott was no policy man. He followed his own judgment, irrespective of the opinions of his best friends. Accordingly, he brought the subject before the Antislavery Society at the Lowell Conference of 1840, but failed to get the measure indorsed. This alienated him from many of his brethren, and he projected a convention, to be held in New York the ensuing October, where he also failed of his object. He then called the friends of the movement together, and carried it into effect; but it accomplished very little, except to prepare the way for the secession, which was fast approaching.

We can not even name all the exciting issues of this period. Slavery was slowly losing its power in Congress. Johnson's gag law passed by a majority of only *six*, whereas Pinckney's passed four years before by a majority of fifty-eight. The Birney and Tappan wing of the American and Massachusetts Societies were leaning more toward political action. All these things operated to produce caution, and imposed upon loyal Methodists the tax of defending themselves against the assaults of leading abolitionists, as well as against slave-holders and their apologists.

GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1840.

The General Conference of 1840 met at Baltimore, and indorsed the administration of the bishops, though it had been diverse—putting motions on the vexed question in the South, and refusing to do so elsewhere. But Rev. S. Comfort, a Northern man, must needs appeal from a decision of the Missouri

Conference, which condemned his administration in allowing the testimony of a negro against a white man in a Church trial. The case was duly argued, and the appeal was sustained, virtually saying that he did right. This was a bombshell in the camp of the majority, and they threatened a division of the Church, as usual. But after brooding over the subject for nearly two weeks, Dr. Ignatius A. Few offered the following soothing resolution, which was adopted:

“*Resolved*, That it is inexpedient and unjustifiable for any preacher among us to permit colored persons to give testimony against white persons in any State where they are denied that privilege in trials at law.”

Seeing the injurious effect which this resolution would produce in the North, great efforts were made to reconsider it; but the South would not consent. So, an attempt was made to neutralize it by another; but it was too late—the mischief had been done.

SECESSION COMPLETED, AND ITS EARLY EFFECTS.

Mr. Scott was discouraged. The new doctrine of episcopal authority disaffected many with our government, and some left quietly and went to other Churches. Not a few held on, moaning, “There is no hope.” In the mean time, the Garrisonians denounced us, and called upon our members to come out of the Church, and be separate. November 8, 1842, it was reported that Rev. Jotham Horton, Orange Scott, and La Roy Sunderland, had withdrawn, and were about to start a new Church. Another paper soon appeared, called *The True Wesleyan*, developing the grand scheme, declaring

Methodist abolition to be dead, and calling upon all true abolitionists to rally to the new standard.

To show that we were still alive, an antislavery convention was held at Bromfield Street, Boston, January 18, 1843, which denounced slavery in regular orthodox terms; but, at the same time, contrary to the intentions of the movers in it, it avowed some of the cardinal sentiments of the seceders. Mr. Scott was delighted, and *The Christian Advocate* made it the occasion of another outpouring upon abolitionists. The movers were mortified, and lost nearly all faith in man. But the convention did good by reassuring the people that there was no abatement of our antislavery zeal.

This gave a new aspect to the controversy. Till near this time, the question of an antislavery secession had not been openly debated. An intention to secede had been charged upon the party, but had been unequivocally denied, except, perhaps, by a few, who spake with less apparent concern about an event of that nature. "They could not tell what would take place, but they had not determined on any such step as yet." But, after a while, they began to teach the sinfulness of maintaining Church relations with a denomination which countenanced slavery; that there was no hope of reforming the Church; and to give other unmistakable intimations of alienation and radical intentions. But here they were met. Those who had been with them in the heat of the battle, loved the Church, notwithstanding her tardiness, and would not cherish the thought of dissolving their connection with her. Nor would they allow the party they had co-operated with in

good faith for the extinction of slavery to run off, or bring in divisional questions, without resistance.

Thus, the antislavery ranks became much divided, on these and collateral questions, into loyal and radical parties, both of which contended earnestly for their respective views and modes of operation. But the wheels of the radicals dragged heavily. The new issue, which they were endeavoring to make, and the project they had evidently undertaken, depreciated their influence among their antislavery friends, and left them little hope of regaining their former standing in the conference; whereupon, the leading spirits seemed to adjust themselves to their unfortunate condition, and watch the developments of time.

From this time *Zion's Herald* was fully open to the new issues, and did good service. Church officials became quite conciliatory, and annual and quarterly conferences were allowed to say about what they pleased, while many who had stood aloof dropped into line to oppose secession, if not slavery. Mr. Scott worked hard, and died too soon for so able a man. Mr. Sunderland went into Mesmerism, repudiating most of his Methodistic views; and Mr. Horton, with many others, returned to the Church. The secession was a sad affair, and caused many evils; and yet it now seems to have been almost necessary to the grand consummation of liberty to the captives.

We speak of these circumstances with painful recollections. These men were our friends and elder brethren. We stood with them in the very heat of the conflict, and loved them as our own life. They were good men and strong; they meant right, and they did right in many particulars. But they thought

themselves injured, and it grieved them to the heart—perhaps enraged them—and they could not endure it. That others would have done better in their situation is not certain. The movement was, to some extent, successful. Several preachers, with a considerable number of lay members, withdrew, and united in the formation of a new Church, which they were pleased to christen “The Wesleyan Methodist Church.” The loss of numbers and influence to us, though considerable, was not the greatest evil connected with the affair. The bitter discussions, and the division of young and feeble societies, unavoidably connected with the outbreak, were most to be deprecated. However, the contest was carried on with as little asperity, and with as few evil consequences, as could have been expected, every thing considered. The lines of demarkation were soon drawn, and the controversy passed away to swell the history of human infirmities.

The Wesleyans took high ground against slavery, eschewing all bishops and presiding elders, supplying their places by presidents of conferences, stationing committees, and chairmen of districts. In doctrine, and in most other respects, they have adhered pretty closely to their old principles. They have a Book Concern in Syracuse, New York, a missionary society, and the other *et cætera* usually connected with such establishments. Many who left the Church, at first, have returned, not having succeeded in the new enterprise as they anticipated. It is their opinion that the old Church is the least objectionable, especially since the separation of the South; but some are of a different opinion, The American Wesleyan

Methodists, which is their proper title, claim 250 traveling preachers, and 20,000 members.

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1844.

This body met in Greene Street Church, in the city of New York, under peculiar circumstances. The Southern conferences were growing more and more sensitive and exacting with regard to slavery, and the Northern and Eastern conferences were in a state of revolution, some having already seceded, and others inclined to follow them should there be no change in the temper of the General Conference toward them. The body was divided into three classes, consisting of about fifty-six delegates, who were ready to indorse and defend slavery as it existed in the South; thirty who would condemn and cripple it by all reasonable means; and some eighty-five who wished to maintain the long-established Discipline and usages of the Church on the subject. Agitation was inevitable.

In the first place, there was an appeal from the decision of the Baltimore Conference, by Francis A. Harding, implicating him on account of his connection with slavery. The Southern delegates rallied to his support, and the case was ably argued by Rev. William A. Smith, of Virginia, for the appellant, and Rev. John A. Collins for the conference, and decided in favor of the conference and against slavery by a vote of one hundred and seventeen to fifty-six. This was an important step in the right direction.

Next came the case of Bishop Andrew, who had become slightly connected with the "great evil" by marriage. This, too, was long and eloquently

argued, almost entirely by Southern and middle men, and it was decided "that he desist from the exercise of his office so long as this impediment remains." This was adopted by a vote of one hundred and ten to sixty-eight, and was another right step in compliance with antislavery petitions.

The third great point specifically deprecated, related to the Few resolution, passed in 1840, pronouncing it "unjustifiable for any preacher among us to permit colored persons to give testimony against white persons," etc. It was asked that this be rescinded, which, after another struggle, was done by a vote of one hundred and fifteen to forty against it.

These and other matters held the conference in session some six weeks, during which time the abolitionists were treated to many hard speeches, particularly from the South; but they were abused by no formal action of the body, and kept their temper.

The Southern delegates were greatly offended, and asked to be set off into a separate Church, which the conference had no power to do. They finally obtained the passage of a paper, reported by the committee of "nine," designed to meet an emergency which they feared would take place on their return home, and improperly called since the "Plan of Separation." Assuming to act on this paper, the Southern conferences separated, in 1845, and organized the Methodist Episcopal Church South, taking with them most of the slave-holding States, embracing nearly 500,000 members and a corresponding number of preachers, and obtained afterward by law their *pro rata* proportion of our connectional property.

This was justly regarded by politicians, at the time, as the entering wedge to the dissolution of the Union, which had long been sought by John C. Calhoun and other extremists of the South. The Methodist Episcopal Church, having a powerful influence in the South and a highly conservative element in the North, had held the nation together for many years, giving herself and others an opportunity to Christianize the slaves and prepare them for freedom, and to abolitionize the North—to be ready to resist the mad scheme of dissolution when it should be undertaken, and proclaim liberty to the captives. Thus, by fidelity to principle, the Methodist Episcopal Church sacrificed more than one-third of its territory, membership, and property, while most other Churches sacrificed nothing comparatively, having no organic connection with the slave-holding States. We say this, not to blame them, but to show the different circumstances in which Northern Methodists were placed, and the objects they unconsciously served in preparing the way for the inevitable rebellion.

THE SEPARATION OF THE SOUTH OPPOSED.

The General Conference having adjourned, the annual conferences commenced to hold their sessions, beginning with the New York Conference, two days after. The paper adopted by the General Conference, before mentioned, had to be submitted to the annual conferences for confirmation, with regard to the alteration of the sixth restrictive rule of the Discipline, providing for a division of the property of the Book Concern with the South, should

they separate, as they might be forced by public feeling to do. The New York Conference gave its approval at once, and the others would probably have done the same, but for the intervention of Dr. Elliott, editor of the *Western Christian Advocate*, and other distinguished loyalists to the Church, who assailed the action of the General Conference in the premises, and took strong ground against the alteration of the rule, so as to defeat the project of separation; and they succeeded in defeating the change of the rule, but not the separation, and thus entailed on the Church a disgraceful and expensive lawsuit, which cost the Book Concern a good share of its property.

Some of them went further than this, and declared great love to the Southern brethren, and assured them that abolitionism was dying out and would not be likely to trouble them any more, and they had better hold fast to the Church; but abolitionists were not pleased with this policy, first, because it was false in its statements; and, secondly, they were satisfied that a separation of some sort must take place, and they preferred that the South should leave rather than secede themselves. One of them, therefore, wrote an article called "Things as They Are," which was published in *Zion's Herald*, with a considerable number of signatures, giving all parties to understand that abolition was in full force. This touched Dr. Elliott in a tender place, and he fell upon the writer with great violence, but refused to allow him to reply in his paper to the extent of one word, an injustice which he afterward confessed privately; but the South made good use of the article,

believing it to be true, as it really was, and it helped them to carry out their project of independency. (See *Quarterly Review* for April, 1871, pp. 234-250.)

OTHER GENERAL CONFERENCES.

Our next opportunity to express a sentiment on the subject officially, occurred at the General Conference, in 1848, in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. Dr. Lovick Pierce, a gentleman of unquestionable piety and ability, appeared there as a delegate from the Church South, asking for fraternization. This was a dangerous point, but was passed without damage. The conference declined the overture, and no fraternal intercourse was authorized during the existence of slavery. It would have been suicidal for the North to have entered into any such alliance. The General Conference at Boston, in 1852, did little more on the subject than to receive and refer petitions. There was, however, an exciting scene near the close of the session, growing out of some loving remarks, hopefully anticipating a reunion with the South. It created a momentary storm, and gave abolitionists to see that their work was not done, and inspired them for the successful contest of 1856. We call it successful, because the subject had a fair consideration and the conference adopted antislavery measures, though it failed to exclude slavery in all its parts from the Church by changing the General Rule. This was, however, done in 1864.

ERRORS AND SINS OVERRULED BY PROVIDENCE.

In looking at this long-continued controversy, we find it every-where marked by human infirmity, to

say the least of it. We are not much disposed to sit in judgment on the parties involved. None of them can take great credit to themselves. If abolitionists had been brought up in the South, they would probably have acted much as Southerners did, and *vice versa*; but it is pleasant to see that even our most exceptionable conduct was overruled by an all-wise Providence to promote emancipation. Southern Methodists regarded their separation from the Church as a wonderful achievement in favor of peace and the perpetuity of slavery. Southern politicians considered their various triumphs in Congress in passing gag-laws, breaking down the Missouri Compromise, annexing Texas, and enforcing the Fugitive Slave Law as so many strong supports to their "peculiar institution;" and yet they all contributed to destroy it. So of the objectionable enactments of the Southern and General Conferences. Every one of them operated to undermine the very thing they were intended to conserve and perpetuate.

But nobody understood their bearings at the time, and it is well they did not. Abolitionists did not kill slavery. That was done by slave-holders, their apologists and defenders. Slavery was unfortunately intrenched in the government and feeling of the country; and, had its special guardians been content with the many advantages they enjoyed over the free States, they might have perpetuated it and ruled the country as they did when they had Congress and the courts in their own hands. It was their grasping after more territory, and undertaking to "marshal their slaves at the foot of Bunker Hill," so to speak, that ruined them. They were deter-

mined to be recognized, and have the free run of all the States and territories, unmolested by abolitionists; hence, they imperiously called upon Northern legislatures to make laws to gag their own constituents and deliver them over to the tender mercies of the slave-power.

We were present when they were hunting Burns, and had a chain around Boston Court-house to protect their claims. The insult offered to that city was deeply felt, and might easily enough have developed into a mob; but abolitionists said, "No, this will do good;" and it did. It inspired the prompt response of New England to the subsequent call for soldiers to put down the Rebellion, to say nothing more. It is strange that oppressors can not learn that there is a limit to human endurance.

While we claim little credit for any class of men in freeing the nation from this foul blot, believing that God largely controlled them all, and turned their sins and blunders to good account, we can not conceal the conviction that the Methodist Episcopal Church exerted a powerful influence in favor of the grand achievement. A few particulars bearing upon this point will close the discussion.

PRELIMINARY STATEMENTS.

It is a singular fact that the same year the *Mayflower* landed at Plymouth (A. D. 1620) a Dutch ship sailed into the James River with twenty African slaves, thus giving slavery and liberty an even start in the country. When Methodism sung its first hymn on these shores, A. D. 1766, slavery was one hundred and forty-six years old, and numbered

about five hundred thousand African subjects. With its first utterances Methodism denounced holding human beings as property a great sin, to be avoided. Going South, it rebuked the masters and sympathized with the slaves, and was early mobbed for both. Being especially intent on saving men of all classes and conditions, it urged masters and servants to repent and come to Christ. Many did so. But when slave-holders became alarmed, and preferred no preaching to an antislavery Gospel, and the preachers saw that they must deal more tenderly with the subject or be forbidden to preach to the slaves, they modified their course so as to retain their position, and do what they could for all parties.

It is also important to be borne in mind that the slaves at that time were in the most degraded condition, having lately been stolen from the wilds of Africa. It was cheaper to keep up the supply in this way than by "raising" them, and this policy prevailed until 1808, when the African slave-trade was legally (not practically) abolished. Slaves were regarded by their owners as property, like horses, and treated with less consideration, and herded together promiscuously, more like beasts than human beings. This view of their condition is fully confirmed by ample testimony from both friends and foes of the race.

EFFORTS TO CHRISTIANIZE THE SLAVES.

How the labors of our Church to Christianize and civilize the slaves succeeded, may be inferred from the minutes of the conferences, which began to report colored members separately in 1786. The

first report showed their number to be 1,890. In 1793 they had increased to 16,227, and amounted to more than one-quarter of our entire membership. In 1824 they were reported at 48,096, and in 1845, the last report made to our Church from the South, they numbered 150,120, nearly one-seventh of our entire Church. The next year the minutes show but 30,515 colored members, indicating that nearly 119,605 of those reported the year before were slaves, and had separated from us with the Church South.

This work had been carried on for fifty years by the regular ministers, and our colored members had come to number nearly forty thousand before our Missionary Society was formed, in 1819, when the Church commenced to send missionaries among the slaves. Our missionary collections had averaged, several years before the separation, from \$132,000 to \$146,000 per annum, from which liberal appropriations had been made for the conversion and elevation of the slaves.

Thus our Church was long at work preparing the slaves for freedom before modern abolitionism was born, and it continued in it with increasing activity till the breaking out of the Rebellion, collecting and expending hundreds of thousands of dollars for their special benefit.

OTHER IMPORTANT FACTS.

Let us look at the subject in another of its aspects. The territorial laws of Indiana were largely in sympathy with slavery and the South. When Illinois was set off, it carried these offensive laws

with it, and it required much effort to get them repealed, and better ones enacted. In 1818 it adopted a constitution excluding slavery. But when Missouri was admitted a slave State, two years after, a plot was formed to change the Constitution of Illinois, and make that also a slave State. The measure was carried through the Legislature, by dint of rascality and rowdiness, so far as to approve of a convention for the purpose; but when it came to go before the people, it was defeated by more than two thousand votes. Methodist preachers were every-where, as usual, and took strong ground against the change, stumping the State as ministers and Christian politicians, and visiting from house to house, creating public sentiment against the measure. Some of them fared hard, being shamefully abused; but they fought bravely, and had the credit of saving the State to liberty.

Similar attempts were made in California and Kansas; but our preachers were in these territories also, with true Wesleyan hostility to the extension of the "great evil," and bravely entered the political arena with might and main, and triumphed. We have not room for the particulars, which would more than confirm these statements. The country owes it to John Wesley and his followers that slavery was not in the ascendant in this country long ago. Following the early settlers in our Western territories, with Mr. Wesley's burning "Thoughts on Slavery" in their saddle-bags, for sale, Methodist preachers created a public sentiment against the abomination that could not be overcome, and gave freedom to the new States.

When a few Quakers and others began to breathe aloud against slavery, in 1828, they were promptly greeted by a certain part of the Church as fellow-laborers. Northern Methodists did a great work in creating a public conscience on the subject, that should demand the liberation of the slaves in the coming emergency, and fight out the Rebellion "on this line."

Again, the slaves coming to this country from pagan Africa, where they ran naked and wild, it is not wonderful that they were accounted an inferior race, forming a connecting link between men and monkeys. Had nothing been done to elevate them, this error would have been current to-day. But, giving them the Gospel, they opened their eyes to a new life, and assumed the decencies of civilization. Many of them manifested intellect, genius, and moral excellence that were remarkable. They became teachers, preachers, and especially exemplars of Gospel purity. The hero of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," whom we had the pleasure of entertaining before he became so famous, and regarded as a grand specimen of nobility, was only one among hundreds of his class. Then, there were multitudes of others, equally good, who let their light shine wherever they went, proving the falsity of the notion that Africans are inferior to white people, and the wickedness of treating them as property. Many a slave-holder has felt ashamed of himself when he witnessed their Christian deportment, and thought of his relation to them. Such specimens of good character have been a standing rebuke to the system and to the Government which has fostered it. And they were developed by

the process of Christianization to which we have referred, in which many outside abolitionists took no part whatever.

Another fact to be taken into account is, that the Methodist Episcopal Church has published more antislavery books and tracts than any other denomination, or any general publishing house in the country, having begun the work long before the modern agitation of the question commenced, in the issue of Wesley's "Thoughts on Slavery." There has never been a day since 1780 when these sentiments have not been ringing out from the Methodist press, in all the States, North and South.

The action of our Church in this country is strikingly analogous to that of the Wesleyans of England. A slave-holder in the West Indies, visiting London with one or two of his servants, heard Mr. Wesley preach, and became converted. Returning home, he carried the new religion with him, and proclaimed it to his neighbors and friends, as before stated. This was the mustard-seed from which the great tree of Methodism among the slaves proceeded. At length, missionaries were sent out, and the work of lifting up that degraded population to the dignity of Christian civilization was carried on slowly but surely. The missionaries saw the terrible injustice done to the poor creatures, but could do or say little to relieve them. But the people at home were active, and pressed hard for emancipation. Thus, while the missionaries were preparing the slaves to enjoy liberty, the Churches at home were moving upon Parliament to grant it. There, as here, one part of the Church went before to prepare the slaves for freedom, and

another class remained at home to procure freedom for them. And God blessed the efforts of both, and emancipation was proclaimed, to the joy of earth and heaven, and has proved a benediction to all parties.

THE MORAL INFLUENCE OF CONFLICTING AGENCIES.

How little any of us knew in the antislavery contest what we were doing! The conversion of the North to abolition sentiments, and the civilization of the slaves, were indispensable. Both required time to achieve them. Had the Rebellion come much before it did, the slaves would not have been in condition to enjoy freedom, nor the North in any state of mind to proclaim emancipation, and enforce it. All parties, therefore, had a little share in the work. Outside abolitionists helped to create the necessary public sentiment in the North, in common with Methodists and other Christians; but they did nothing to elevate the slaves. Methodists, abolitionists, and some few others, prepared the slaves for liberty in connection with the conservatives, who furnished the men to do the work, as abolitionists were not popular with the masters.

And this brings out another point. The conservatives, whom we used to call *pro-slavery*, much to their annoyance, were, to the writer, incomprehensible. It was a mystery how they could do as they did, being so wise and excellent in other respects. Nor could we see what possible good could come of their tenderness to slave-holders, and bitterness toward abolitionists. But now that Providence has lifted the veil, it is all plain enough, though not morally right or consistent. By apologizing for

slavery and flattering the South, they kept off the Rebellion for many years, and gave time to complete the education that was going on at both ends of the line; namely, among the slaves in the South, and the Churches and politicians in the North. So that, in God's Providence, they were unconsciously aiding the coming deliverance, though it was impossible to see it at the time.

Had the Rebellion come several years sooner, it would have succeeded for the want of Northern sentiment and feeling to resist it. Long as it was delayed, many people, and some whole States, were not ready. New England was ready, because it had become pretty thoroughly abolitionized, from its chief magistrates down to its lowest citizens. Mr. Lincoln issued his first proclamation for 75,000 soldiers to protect Washington and put down the Rebellion, April 15, 1861. On the 17th, two days after, the Massachusetts Sixth, the first full regiment that responded, started from Boston by railroad. Would that city have sprung to the front thirty years before, when it mobbed abolitionists; or, several years later, when it hunted fugitives at the beck of the South? Not at all. Who composed this death-daring regiment? Abolitionists. New York, greatly improved on this question since 1844, gave them an ovation as they marched down its grand Broadway the next morning.

But on the 19th, Baltimore, still up to her old tricks, mobbed, stoned, and shot them, killing some, and wounding others, forbidding them to go through her streets. Maryland was not yet ready. And when they escaped that den of rebels, and were on

their way to Washington, their train was fired upon from the hills and woods along the line. Abolition Pennsylvania soldiers were treated in like manner, and had to fight their way through.

But, thank God, nearly all the free States had been abolitionized, and were in the hands of Republican Governors, who were ready for action.

HOW THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH MET THE CONFLICT.

The activity of our people in this terrible emergency was noticeable at the time. Our denominational papers, without an exception, rallied to the national cause. The American flag waved from our spires and draped our pulpits, during our conferences and on other public occasions. Men rushed from our Churches, colleges, and schools, leaving some of them quite depleted. The immortal Lincoln often spoke of it with gratitude. In response to the address of the General Conference of 1864, he said:

“Nobly sustained as the Government has been by all the Churches, I would utter nothing which might in the least appear invidious against any. Yet, without this, it may fairly be said that the Methodist Episcopal Church, not less devoted than the best, is, by its greater numbers, the most important of all. It is no fault in others that the Methodist Church sends more soldiers to the field, more nurses to the hospitals, and more prayers to heaven, than any. God bless the Methodist Church! God bless all the Churches! Blessed be God, who, in this our great trial, giveth us the Churches!”

We have recorded these thoughts, not to boast—

for boasting is excluded—but to give the Gospel and the Church their proper place among the agencies which God has employed to relieve our glorious country from the cruel system of inhumanity which was fastened upon it in its infancy by foreign hands, and which was wickedly nursed by the nation itself into gigantic proportions; also, and particularly, to suggest to the coming historian that the subject admits of a deeper, broader, and juster philosophy than appears in the hurried productions of those who claim to have given it a proper presentation. . The names of the chief actors in the scenes have been purposely omitted, as far as possible, as it is no part of our intention to praise or blame any one.

CHAPTER XII.

THE EFFECT OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1844—HOW
OPPOSED—ORGANIZATION OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL
CHURCH SOUTH—THE COLORED METHODIST EPISCOPAL
CHURCH—GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1848—DEATH OF
BISHOP HEDDING—GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1852—NA-
TIONAL MAGAZINE—STATE OF THE CHURCH—GENERAL
CONFERENCE OF 1856—A NEW COURT PROVIDED FOR—
A STEP TOWARD RITUALISM.

THE effect of the action of the General Conference of 1844 was what might have been expected. It neutralized the secessionist movement among abolitionists, being more antislavery than was anticipated. The administration of the bishops that followed was equally satisfactory, no further prohibition of conference action being attempted.

But when it was seen that the South was going to take advantage of the action had in their case and organize another Church, many demurred, and threw every possible obstacle in their way; but it was of no use. They were determined to go, and the writer thought it best, all things considered, and voted to give them their proportion of our connectional property, and urged others to do the same, both by pen and speech, and has never regretted it for one moment. They left because they did not agree with the Church, and have since managed to suit themselves. If they have been a little tart, it is not remarkable—

they were that before. And, considering the circumstances, it required more grace than falls to the lot of most men to have been otherwise.

The facts about the separation, in few words, are as follows: June 3, 1844, after the action had in the case of Bishop Andrew, Dr. Capers presented a paper to the conference, proposing arrangements for the division of the Church into two General Conferences, which was referred to a committee of nine. The committee regarded the proposition as preposterous, there being no provision in the Discipline for such division, and the project fell dead. Two days after, Dr. Longstreet presented another paper, signed by fifty-one Southern delegates, declaring that the action had in regard to slavery and Bishop Andrew "must produce a state of things in the South which renders a continuance of the jurisdiction of this General Conference over these conferences inconsistent with the success of the ministry in the slave-holding States." This was also referred to a select committee of nine. The next day came a protest, declaring "the South can not submit, and the absolute necessity of division is already dated." Separation had already been decreed by the delegates. The order of these proceedings was as follows: 1. "The decision in Mr. Harding's case, May 11th. 2. The decision in Bishop Andrew's case, May 30th. 3. Dr. Capers's resolutions for the division of the Church, and their failure, June 3d. 4. The declaration of the Southern delegates, June 5th. 5. The report of the Committee of Nine, June 8th." (*Great Secession*, p. 332.)

This report was strictly provisional, looking to the

contingency of a separation of the Southern Conferences, purely at their *own* suggestion and on their *own* responsibility, and without authority from the General Conference; for it had already been settled that the General Conference possessed no authority to divide the Church in the manner proposed. Here the matter ended, so far as the General Conference was concerned, and the Southern Conferences took the responsibility of all that followed.

Or, to State the case more fully, the South said: "We can not live under these circumstances; we shall be driven from our fields, and the souls committed to our care will perish. What shall we do? Suppose, on getting home, we should find it *indispensable* to separate, how will the General Conference view us? How shall we be treated? Shall there be friendly relations, and an amicable settlement of the property question; or shall we be viewed as enemies?" Middle men were anxious to accommodate, and Eastern men were fearful of the consequences of not doing so; for it was already under contemplation to reconsider Bishop Andrew's case, and lay it over four years, agreeably to the recommendation of the board of bishops, unless something conciliatory should be done. It was an exciting moment, and great men were at their wits' end to know what to do.

Finally the committee agreed upon a plan to meet the anticipated *emergency*, and reported it to the conference. It was not all they could wish, but it was the best they could devise, and it was favorably received. Southern delegates were greatly relieved, and submitted to the rescinding of Few's colored testimony resolution, passed four years before,

with remarkable composure; and the conference was permitted to leave New York without the honor of being mobbed, as it was tremblingly feared they would be, and without *undoing* the work it had unexpectedly wrought, in the several particulars before mentioned.

Whether the conference acted the prudent part in this measure is seriously questioned. Some, who were foremost in getting the plan through, have deeply regretted it since. Northern men, generally, who favored it, did so *purely* to avoid what they regarded a greater and insupportable evil. To have left Bishop Andrew in the full exercise of episcopal powers at that time, would have scattered our Churches to the winds; and *that*, it was believed *on good authority*, would have been the result of preventing the adoption of this or some similar plan of conciliation. Indeed, we only escaped, as it was; a circumstance which should never be forgotten in treating of the action of New England men in the premises. Our choice was between having a slave-holding bishop, the transfer of our Churches to Wesleyanism, so called, or a *general New England secession*, on the one hand; and acquiescence in a plan, some features of which we did not approve, but could not get altered, either in the committee, or in the conference, on the other. We preferred the latter. It seemed to us better to be *the* Methodist Episcopal Church, united and at peace, than to be a distracted limb of it, or separate, however harmoniously, and let the South hold the old title, and the perquisites connected therewith. And if they had a mind to take the responsibility of separating, we were not

disposed to demur, to treat them discourteously, or to withhold from them anything that they could lawfully claim, and the Church lawfully bestow. Hence, we concurred in the plan, though not satisfied with it, and the South has taken all the advantage of it possible to become an independent body, and adjust themselves to what *they* regarded the *necessities* of their situation. For one, the writer can not regret it. Had they remained in the Church, there must have been an endless controversy, to very little purpose.

But whether this action was wise or not, the annual conferences failed to indorse it, and the South infringed its express and implied conditions to such an extent that the General Conference of 1848 pronounced it "null and void," and have not rescinded that action since.

We refer to the subject only as a mere matter of history, and not to censure either party. It was a part of the complicated machinery employed by Providence to "extirpate" the "great evil" of American slavery, and had its influence on that grand consummation.

THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH SOUTH ORGANIZED.

May 1, 1845, the delegates of fourteen Southern conferences, met at Louisville, Kentucky, and proceeded to organize a new Church, which they denominated, "The Methodist Episcopal Church South." Bishops Andrew and Soule gave their assent to the measure, and were recognized as bishops. A new Discipline was arranged, retaining our doctrines and economy, except in regard to slavery, and some

governmental questions not of much practical importance, and the conferences were called upon to rally to the new standard, and many did so, claiming that slavery is sustained by the Bible, and is not a moral evil.

We are not able to state the exact number of our ministers or people who were transferred to the Church South by the action of the convention, or by their own; but the minutes show that we had in 1844, 4,621 traveling preachers; 8,087 local preachers; and 1,171,356 members; and in 1847, when the Southern organization had become very nearly complete, we were reduced to 3,642 traveling preachers; 4,913 local preachers; and 631,558 members; showing a loss of 979 traveling preachers; 3,174 local preachers; and 539,798 members, over and above any gain that we made in the loyal conference.

This separation made a similar draft upon the connectional property of the Church. The General Conference not having authority to divide this property without the constitutional consent of the annual conferences, which was asked for by the before mentioned report of the Committee of Nine, but not granted, the Church South sued for an equitable proportion of it, and, after a long and expensive contest, carried their point, and received as follows: From New York, \$190,000 in cash, together with the Richmond, Charleston, and Nashville printing establishments, and all debts due to the concern, from individuals residing within the geographical limits of the Methodist Episcopal Church South. From Cincinnati the sum of \$80,000, and all debts due from

persons living in the Southern States. Besides this, we had to pay the taxable costs of both suits.

THE PRESENT STATE OF THE CHURCH SOUTH.

The Church South reports for 1875, eight bishops; 3,485 traveling preachers; 5,356 local preachers; and 712,765 members; including 3,489 colored members, and 4,779 Indians. It has, also, 7,204 Sunday-schools, embracing 328,634 scholars. It further reports \$101,953.46 raised last year for missions. These figures indicate a respectable increase, and promise well for the future, especially when we consider that they have dismissed most of their colored members, who have united, under their advice and influence, to form "The Colored Methodist Episcopal Church," whose numbers we shall soon record. They have also a Book Concern at Nashville, Tennessee, a Missionary Society, and nearly all the appliances of the old Church; and publish several periodicals.

These divisions caused much disturbance between Northern and Southern Methodists. Many societies were divided, sometimes one party taking the property, and sometimes the other. And other differences of a similar character may occur, but it is to be hoped that they will be more than counterbalanced by the healthy competition which they shall inspire. The tendency of the times is to fraternization. Though the two bodies may never become organically reunited, they can, and should maintain friendly relations, as the Methodist Episcopal Church ever has done with the Wesleyans of England and Canada. What was impossible fifteen years ago without the

sacrifice of moral principle, will be quite practicable so soon as the parties concerned can conquer their prejudices. And they will reach that point some day, we think, when there will be an interchange of ministerial service, such as now prevails among the conferences of both bodies. But it is not wise to hurry the matter. Fraternity can not be produced by votes. Time, and friendly recognition, will need little help to effect all that is desirable in this direction.

THE COLORED METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

This body, as before hinted, is an offshoot from the Methodist Episcopal Church South, and was organized under its auspices, from prudential considerations, December 16, 1872. In 1874, it reported *fourteen* conferences, 635 traveling, and 683 local preachers; and 67,883 lay members. This arrangement accommodates the prejudice against color in both races, and allows them to keep respectfully apart; and it may have other advantages which we do not now comprehend. "God bless them all," we believe, is the honest prayer of their Northern brethren generally.

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1848.

This body convened in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, representing 780 traveling preachers, and 532,290 members *less* than the Church numbered four years before—a sad loss, solely attributable to the separation of the South. Our missionary and other collections had also suffered, but not to the same degree. The Book Concern remained intact, the question of

Southern claims not being settled. The Church South appeared before the conference by its delegates, asking for settlement, and for fraternal recognition, but they were not received. A resolution, adopted in 1840 in subserviency to slavery, was rescinded, which was about all that was done directly in relation to the subject. Still, it was ever present, and largely controlled in home matters, not involving the Church South. Abolitionists, however, did succeed, by skillful and persistent engineering, in electing Rev Abel Stevens editor of the *Christian Advocate*, in place of Dr. Bond. Not that Mr. Stevens was *one* with them, for he never claimed any such relation, but in hope that he would treat them, and the subject, more fairly than Dr. Bond had done. But this was lost labor, as Mr. Stevens, for reasons best known to himself, resigned, and the office was transferred to Dr. George Peck.

This conference, too, radically changed the *arrangement* of the Discipline, as it did some of its rules, and Dr. C. Elliott was appointed to write the history of the quadrennium, which resulted in the issue of of his mammoth volume, entitled the "The Great Secession," a valuable book, abounding in documents relative to slavery, abolition, and their concomitants, and, singular as it may seem, in unutterable hatred to both.

Dr. Dixon, a most able and genial minister of the British Conference, was present, and ably represented that body, and Bishop Hedding was invited to reciprocate the courtesy, if his health would allow of it, which he failed to do. The conference adjourned after a pleasant session of one month with

five bishops, eight colleges, thirty-four seminaries, and thirty-one conferences, having lost *nine* by the separation of the South.

The four years following were characterized by the usual variety of toil and conflict, creating hopes and fears incident to every period, but still affording gratifying results. Our net increase was 672 traveling preachers, and 89,634 members, with corresponding improvement in other departments of interest.

DEATH OF BISHOP HEDDING.

The melancholy event of this quadrennium was the death of the venerable Bishop Hedding, which occurred at his home, in Poughkeepsie, New York, April 9, 1852. He was a remarkable man, sincerely pious and devout, loving, and kind to every body, and about the grandest specimen of a bishop that could well be imagined. We heartily indorse the tribute to his memory presented by his bereaved colleagues to the General Conference of 1852. They said: "His end was peaceful, happy, and triumphant. He sustained the highly responsible office of general superintendent of the Methodist Episcopal Church for nearly twenty-eight years. With a strong and discriminating mind, busily engaged for so many years in acquiring knowledge and wisdom from various sources of literature, science, philosophy, and religion, we shall not be regarded as extravagant eulogists when we say that he has left few equals in the Church; and, take him all in all, no superior survives him. With all his greatness, he had the simplicity of a child. His amiability, gentleness,

and kindness endeared him to all with whom he had intercourse, from the prattling child to the youth, to the middle-aged, and to those of old age and declining years. All felt at ease in the society of this truly good man, and were delighted with his unpretending and attractive manners. As a preacher, he had many and great excellencies. As an administrative officer, he was justly esteemed unrivaled in the soundness of his opinions, the earnestness of his constitutional views and legal decisions, and the dignity and urbanity of his manner." (Journal, p. 181.)

We may add, he had great faith in the preachers, and profound sympathy for them in their trials, growing out of his noble nature sanctified by grace, and his long and severe experience on wild and hard circuits and districts before he was made bishop. They found in him a brother, and even a father, who made their welfare his own, and planned for their highest happiness, so far as he could do it consistently with the cause of God. He never imposed burdens on them which *he* had not borne, or enjoined a heroism which *he* had not displayed. If he could not gratify their wishes, he would come as near it as possible, and never trifle with their feelings. If he must afflict them, he did it tenderly, sorrowfully, so that they felt that he suffered with them.

Being stationed at one of his old homes, and among the dearest friends of his early ministry, where he used to delight to "rest awhile," the writer knew him well. He met him in the cabinet, too, and in his conflict with certain abolitionists who did not know him, and who therefore questioned his integrity; but, in every condition, he was the great

and good Bishop Hedding—in error, as we thought, on one subject, but not to be the less loved or honored. We met him in the General Conference of 1844, and marked his solicitude. He loved New England, the home of his youth and the field of his early labors, and pleaded for it when in danger of being dishonored by Southern prejudice. Soon after the bishops' report, advising the laying over the case of Bishop Andrew, was read and laid upon the table, he came past the writer's seat, and, giving him a tap on the shoulder, said, "Let me see you a minute." We followed him to the basement, when he asked, with manifest anxiety, "What do you think of that advice?" We then read to him certain resolutions, unanimously adopted, the day before, by all the New England delegates, in anticipation of such advice, to the effect that, should the case be thus laid over, and Bishop Andrew be left a bishop in full authority, the only way for the New England conferences to prevent being completely broken up by the seceders, would be to separate in a body, and invite Bishop Hedding to preside over them. These resolutions were to have been put into the bishop's hands before he should meet his colleagues, but were not copied in season; and the committee feared to call him out, lest they should create suspicion, and do more hurt than good. On hearing these resolutions, "O!" said the bishop, "I am sorry you did not bring them;" and, with despair on his countenance, he added, "That is so, and I will go right up and withdraw my name from that paper," which he did, saying that he signed it in doubt, hoping that it might be for the best; but, from further

information which he had received, he felt compelled to withdraw his name. That killed the postponement, and saved New England.

For those who have the management and direction of preachers and people, Bishop Hedding was a model worthy of study and imitation.

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1852.

The eleventh delegated General Conference met in Boston, May 1st, and continued in session one month. The address of the bishops was an interesting vindication of certain fundamental features of Methodism, suggesting and even urging the extension of the probation of ministers to *four* years, which has not been done yet, and probably will not be at present. As opportunities for preparation increase, the necessity for extending the probation diminishes.

The same address called attention to the rule relating to the location of preachers for unacceptability, and, strange to say, suggests its modification so as to allow a conference to locate them without a formal trial, to save time and embarrassment. (Journal, p. 188.) The history of this rule furnishes an interesting chapter, which traveling preachers may profitably study.

The conference made quite an impression on New England, it being the first one of the kind ever held in that quarter. His honor, the mayor of Boston, in behalf of the city authorities, invited the members of the General Conference to a steamboat excursion among the islands of its unparalleled harbor. The invitation was accepted, and the excursion

was one of marked interest and pleasure, presenting a wide contrast with the reception of Jesse Lee, sixty-two years before, who entered the city alone, on horseback, unheralded, and preached under the old elm on the common for the want of a better place, and sought for months, in vain, to improve his situation. But the world moves. By faith, the walls of Jericho even fell down, after they had been long compassed about. Boston was obliged to acknowledge a power which its former authorities sought to ignore, and it was well and handsomely done.

New England also impressed the conference. Middle and Western men, who had never seen the "*Hub*" or its surrounding Methodism, thought rather lightly of both, and were not easily convinced of their mistake; but they were compelled to confess that Boston held and practiced some Methodist "*notions*" that they might profitably adopt. In these respects, at least, the conference was a success.

OF THE BUSINESS TRANSACTED.

The episcopacy was strengthened, at this conference, by the election of Levi Scott, Matthew Simpson, Edward R. Ames, and Osmon C. Baker. The vexed pew question was relieved by rescinding the rigid old rule requiring free churches, and adopting another only giving them the preference. (Discipline, par. 496.) The missionary, tract, and Sunday-school causes received special attention, and Dr. John P. Durbin was made missionary secretary in place of Dr. Charles Pitman, whose health failed him early in the preceding quadrennium.

NATIONAL MAGAZINE AUTHORIZED.

This conference, under educational pressure, authorized the publication of a monthly magazine of "current and religious literature," and appointed Abel Stevens to edit it. The first number appeared the following July, entitled, *The National Magazine*, "devoted to literature, art, and religion;" but it never succeeded, for the reason that it attempted to cater for the patronage of the general public, as its name indicates, and thus forfeited the patronage of the Church. Like Cokesbury College, it started too early in our history; besides, it was too worldly and abstract to command the sympathy of our people. After running a race of five years' continuance, and wasting untold thousands of the earnings of the Book Concern, and still decreasing in circulation, in spite of every effort that could be made to sustain it, the agents submitted the subject to the book committee, in 1857, whose wise advice, looking toward resuscitation, was carried into effect without success. Reporting again to the same committee, in February, 1858, they took the matter into careful consideration, and met again the following June, reporting that Baltimore, Philadelphia, Newark, Troy, Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, Providence, Oneida, New England, New York, and New York East Conferences had advised its discontinuance, whereupon the committee itself advised it. Remembering that the General Conference of 1852 authorized its issue on the express condition that it should be "*safe to the Concern*," and that the last General Conference had voted to continue it in view of the prospect of

an increased circulation sufficient to "*carry it safely through*," the agents felt obliged to suspend it, and did so rather than squander tens of thousands of dollars more in printing a work the people would not purchase. The contributors, of course, mourned its demise, as did some others; but it has never been missed or lamented by the masses of our preachers or people.

Methodism is emphatically spiritual and practical. So long as we keep within our prescribed range, we can cope with the world; but the moment that we depart from it to compete with independent publishers on their particular lines, we fail. Our religion will not allow us to furnish the frolic and fun that takes with the world, nor are the agents permitted, under our system, to procure just that style of editorial management required by the circumstances of such an enterprise.

OF THE STATE OF THE CHURCH.

The Church, at that time, was generally at peace, except that it was a little sensitive on slavery. The border conferences, not being fully delivered from that evil, and being in sharp competition with the Church South, could not bear to hear much on the subject, and abolitionists would not "wholly refrain" from its agitation. Still, the Church enjoyed general prosperity. The net increase of 90,246 members in four years was encouraging; besides, the last five years had improved our Sunday-schools by the addition of 32,741 officers and teachers, 552,681 scholars, and 652,218 volumes to the libraries. Add to this a liberal advance in the contributions to our various

benevolences, and the wonderful growth of our educational enterprises, and we see much cause for thanksgiving; but, what was still more gratifying, the Church seemed to grow in spiritual life and power. The subject of holiness, which had previously suffered from various imprudences, was becoming better understood and more highly appreciated. The pastoral letter sent forth by the conference was, therefore, highly congratulatory, though it administered timely caution against the love of the world, expensive churches, etc.

The following four years developed nothing very striking. The minutes, however, showed an increase of 958 traveling preachers, 910 local preachers, and 77,627 members. There was also a manifest improvement with regard to church edifices. Our people, about that time, began to wake up to the importance of having respectable churches in good locations, instead of the miserable out-of-the-way structures, which they had endured so long. Connected with this discovery was the duty of giving ministers more eligible homes and a better support; and the tide began to flow in these directions. Yet, contrary to all the predictions of the over-cautious and penurious brotherhood, the benevolences of the Church increased in greater proportion. The collections for the Missionary and Bible Societies more than doubled the amount raised the preceding four years.

GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1856.

This body convened at Indianapolis, Indiana, and was composed of two hundred and seventeen mem-

bers. Drs. Hannah and Jobson, of England, were present, bearing the fraternal greetings of the British Conference. Bishop Simpson and Dr. M'Clintock were appointed to visit that body in return, and also to visit the Irish Conference. Delegates from other branches of the Wesleyan family were also present, as usual, and contributed much to the interest of the occasion. The Rev. Robinson Scott, a delegate from the Irish Conference, with his colleague, Mr. Cather, from England, justly attracted much attention. Our Church in this country having been started, and subsequently strengthened and extended by emigrants from Ireland, to the great depletion and impoverishment of the Irish Conference, it naturally occurred to that body in its financial necessities, that it might not be unreasonable to ask a little assistance from us in return. Accordingly, Mr. Scott was deputed to visit the country, which he did some time before, and was cordially welcomed. This conference favored the enterprise, as did many of the annual conferences. One hundred thousand dollars were asked for and conceded; but the receipts must have fallen short of this amount. They were appropriated to the literary institutions of the Irish Conference, before mentioned—a small contribution, indeed, compared with the obligations of American Methodism to that struggling country.

THE ACTION OF THE CONFERENCE.

The action of this body was unusually progressive. The exciting subject of slavery was, for the first time in many years, referred to a standing committee, composed of one member from each annual

conference. In 1848, it was referred to the committee on the state of the Church, and, four years after, to the committee on revisals, which simply meant to get rid of it with the least inconvenience. The motion to refer it to a standing committee meant consideration and fair treatment; it had it, and was properly characterized. The discussion and votes revealed a majority of moderate and decided abolitionists, some of whom refrained from expressing all their hatred to slavery from prudential regard to our Southern border; but they really "meant business." Education and missions among us received much attention, and were heartily commended to the patronage of the people. Eight new conferences were added, to wit: Delaware, Detroit, Peoria, West Wisconsin, Upper Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, Newark, and the German Mission, making *forty-seven* in all.

This conference also improved our arrangements for taking statistics, by requiring an annual report of Church property, which went into operation in 1857, when it appeared that we had 8,335 churches, worth \$15,781,310, and 2,174 parsonages, estimated to be worth \$2,126,874. This was a wise measure, which enables us to mark our financial progress. We shall furnish the annual reports hereafter in tabular form, from which important lessons may be learned.

A NEW COURT PROVIDED FOR.

Much time had been consumed by the trial of preachers in annual conferences, and by the trial of appeals in General Conferences, which being open to the public, often occasioned much mortification. The subject had been ventilated by several General

Conferences, to little purpose, other than to elicit complicated schemes of relief, to perish on the table. This year the subject was referred to a small committee, who reported a simple modification, allowing the conferences concerned to try members and appeals by committees, which report was adopted without one word of objection, and has been generally followed since, saving much time and inconvenience.

The plan for trying appeals by the General Conference was equally simple, and easy to operate; but it was superseded in 1872 by the introduction of a new judicatory, called the Judicial Conference. (See Dis., pp. 124-126, 140-143.) But this plan, we think, is too complicated and expensive for the benefits it proposes, and can not long survive without serious modification. The only advantage of it appears to be, that it sometimes gives the appellant an earlier hearing; but, on the old plan, he was not delayed so long as is quite common in civil courts. But now that the trial is had before a committee, and not before the whole conference, as formerly, it can not be difficult to make up an appellate court within the bounds of most conferences that would be much more convenient, and equally fair to all parties. In this case the appeal may be tried immediately after the verdict is rendered, from which it is taken, before the preachers shall disperse, and thus save time and expense, and not trouble other conferences.

Connected with this *addition*, there was also some pertinent subtraction. The rules in relation to band meetings, and men and women sitting apart in Church, having become useless by the change of circumstances, were rescinded.

A STEP TOWARD RITUALISM.

As we have seen, Mr. Wesley was at first a strict ritualist, read his sermons and prayers, and rigidly followed Church rules. Conversion to God freed him from many of his notions and methods, but never fully from the Established Church and its formularies. Accordingly he prepared a modified ritual and prayer-book for American Methodists, which never found much favor, and soon dropped out of use, with the gown, except on special occasions, such as ordinations, and the administration of the sacraments. Frequent attempts have been made to revive them, rules and resolutions being adopted for that purpose, but to little effect. The General Conference of 1856 inaugurated a gigantic attempt to perfect the ritual by the appointment of a committee to report at the next General Conference. In 1860, nearly the same committee was appointed to prepare a revised ritual, submit it to the bishops, and print it so far as they should approve, and forward a copy to each of the members of that, and the following General Conferences. This was done without stint of labor or expense, and resulted in the adoption of our present ritual in 1864.

The history of these revisions is instructive, showing the folly of clinging to an old system of dead formulas, which have little adaptation to the spirit and aims of Methodism, otherwise known as "Christianity in earnest." The result is, our ritual occupies nearly one-third of our book of Discipline, and is not followed in ordinary service with any considerable uniformity, even where specifically

enjoined. Many object to the sentiments involved, and the language employed, as inappropriate to the spirit and circumstances of the occasion, and prefer to furnish something more modern and impressive. For one, the writer is not surprised. The truth is, as a people, we were never much inclined to ritualism, and, as we grow in grace and knowledge, we have less and less need of these extraneous helps, and feel more inclined to speak, both to God and man, as the Spirit shall give us utterance.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1860—DEATH OF BISHOP WAUGH—FIRST COLORED BISHOP—PROGRESS OF THE CAUSE GENERALLY—LAY DELEGATION, ITS HISTORY AND CONSUMMATION—SIGNS OF THE TIMES PORTENTOUS—HOW REGARDED.

THE thirteenth delegated General Conference met at Buffalo, New York, May 1st, and adjourned on the 4th of June, numbering two hundred and twenty-one delegates. But the seat of the senior bishop of the last session was vacant.

BISHOP WAUGH WAS DEAD.

He was born in Fairfax County, Virginia, in 1789; converted in his fifteenth year; joined the Baltimore Conference in 1809; spent two years on hard circuits; and the following sixteen in Washington, Baltimore, and other important stations; served as Book Agent at New York eight years; and in 1836, he was elected to the office of bishop. He was gentlemanly above the common average of ministers, able, efficient, and successful, loving, and beloved by all who knew him and were capable of appreciating a manly, Christian minister. He died February 9, 1858. "His illness was short, and his death happy. Up to within a few days of his decease he labored with unabated ardor in fulfilling the ministry which

he had received of the Lord Jesus." "As a presiding officer, he was calm, courteous, and dignified; in the delicate and difficult work of stationing the preachers, he was patient, affectionate, and firm; in the councils of the Church, he was discriminating, sagacious, and candid; as an executive officer, he was sympathetic, fraternal, and decided; in Christian excellence, in ministerial fidelity and episcopal usefulness, he was eminent. His loss to the Church and the cause of religion is great."

This seems almost too much to say of any mortal, and yet it falls short of the truth in regard to Bishop Waugh. His mourning colleagues did well in giving this glowing portraiture of his character, and they might have added after all, that he shone brighter in social life than in any other position, where he presented one of the most perfect models of a Christian gentleman that we ever beheld. Our first sight of him was, as he stood erect in the midst of the New York Conference, arguing against the manifest will of the rulers of that body, on a constitutional question. They had little patience with his dissent, but he was calm, sincere, and manly; and prevailed not there, but in the final vote. He was one of the few Southern men who could oppose New England abolition and still command their *love*, though he could not control their sentiments or action. Our last sight of him was at a conference in Michigan, where we spent a whole Sabbath together in the State-house, the governor being present. He was the happiest bishop we ever saw. He shouted and rejoiced like one who saw heaven open. We feared then that he was about to depart, and it was so.

THE FIRST COLORED BISHOP.

The bishops reported at this conference having ordained Rev Francis Burns, of Liberia Conference, to the office of bishop, October 14, 1858, as per order of the last General Conference. After a life of useful service, he closed his career in Baltimore, April 18, 1863, to join the martyr Cox who would have "thousands fall before Africa should be given up." The opening of Liberia Mission was a daring undertaking. Mr. Wright, who soon followed Mr. Cox with his young wife to the grave, was but little known out of Boston; but he was a most healthy and brilliant young preacher. We were received into the conference with him; but he was cut off, O, how soon! The mission, however, has done good. Its martyrs still speak, and will be heard and heeded.

The General Conference of 1864 provided for the election, by the Liberia Conference, of a successor to Bishop Burns, which was effected, and Rev. J. W Roberts was consecrated, at New York, a missionary bishop for Liberia, in June, 1866; but he, too, has lately departed to his heavenly reward.

NEW ASPECTS OF EDUCATION.

As we have seen, the educational movements of the Church were not a success for many years. Then, establishing some few institutions with encouraging prospects, the conferences were urged to multiply them, which they did with so much zeal, that the bishops began to fear that the work was being overdone. Accordingly, in their address to the General Conference of 1860, they suggested the propriety

of imposing some restraint, and objected to making up the faculties with men professing to be moved by the Holy Ghost to preach the Gospel. They say, "it seems inharmonious with the itinerant character of our ministry, and incompatible with the designs of our conference associations, for men, who never intend to enter the pastoral work, but to make teaching a profession for life, to be admitted to membership in the conference." But little attention has been paid to this suggestion, though teaching is just as secular a business as practicing medicine.

The report of this conference presents a summary of 103 institutions, embracing twenty-five collegiate and two theological, valued at \$4,080,465, and employing 633 teachers, giving instruction to 21,616 pupils.

PROGRESS OF THE CAUSE GENERALLY.

This conference was greatly cheered by the progress of the Church in other respects. Powerful revivals had prevailed during the last four years, giving a net increase of 1,469 itinerant preachers, 174,914 members, 1,295 Sunday-schools, 26,140 officers and teachers, and 153,466 scholars. With regard to Church property, the increase had been, in two years, 960 churches, or more than nine per week, and 366 parsonages, averaging over one in two days, showing an advance in value of \$3,341, 624. Our benevolent enterprises also gained considerably, though not in proportion to the other interests named. But this unparalleled prosperity did not create entire satisfaction. The conference was especially agitated by two great questions, namely:

SLAVERY AND LAY DELEGATION.

SLAVERY was nothing new, though particularly alarming just at that time. The South was working up to open rebellion, and loyal men of all parties were fusing into one body, to preserve the Union by force, if necessary. The conference referred the subject to a standing committee, by which it was thoroughly canvassed; and, after an able discussion of it in open conference for several days, the original section of the Discipline on the subject was adopted, in place of one enacted many years before, by a vote of one hundred and fifty-five to fifty-eight against it. There was a great deal of feeling, and some inclined to run the conference strictly on party principles, as the opponents of abolition had always done when they had the power; but a majority were too magnanimous to do it. Dr. Edward Thomson, however, was made editor of the *Christian Advocate*, which led, soon after, to the issue of a competing paper at New York, called *The Methodist*, to represent the conservatives, otherwise known as the pro-slavery party; and the most of the offices were filled by men of that way of thinking, as they had been the preceding term.

LAY DELEGATION had at no time been a question of general interest. The Church having been organized and brought to its present magnitude by the preachers calling the people rather than the people the preachers, and all working on a general platform of doctrine and discipline furnished by Mr. Wesley, it seemed reasonable that the preachers should govern themselves, and, in doing so, govern those who

should be pleased to accept the conditions of membership proposed and follow them; hence, there had been no *general* agitation of the question. In 1818, it was broached in and about Philadelphia, and pushed with much *furor* for ten years, and culminated in secession and the organization of the "Methodist Protestant Church," of which we have already given some account; but the bishops and leading men met the question with such force of argument that it seemed silenced forever. (Bangs's History, Vol. III, p. 397.) But, in 1840, certain abolitionists, feeling oppressed by clerical domination, petitioned the General Conference, asking for lay representation, to whom that body replied (referring approvingly to the action of the General Conference of 1828 and the success of our system) that "it is inexpedient to change the form of our Church government."

Little more was heard on the subject until 1852, when it came up in the General Conference, held in Boston, by further petitions from Philadelphia. It was referred to a committee of twenty-nine, one from each conference, with Rev. Matthew Simpson, now one of our bishops, as chairman. The committee reported adversely to it, and their report was almost unanimously adopted. Similar action was had in 1856; but in 1860 the subject assumed a new aspect. The bishops called attention to it in their opening address, seeming to have lost all their old fear of the terrible results of it which had been previously predicted, particularly if it should be introduced as a separate house.

The petitions were referred without discussion, or any indication that a change of sentiment had

occurred. Near the close of the session the committee reported that few petitions had been received, either for or against, and that the action had by annual and quarterly conferences was strongly adverse to the measure. Yet, strangely enough, it favored its introduction, and presented a plan by which it might be inaugurated at the next session of that body, provided that a majority of the members voting in the annual and quarterly conferences should favor it. This was certainly a most singular report, the history of which remains to be written. Proposing an organic change of our long-established system, in bold antagonism to the arguments and conclusions of all preceding General Conferences, and in opposition to the petitions and official votes presented to the committee, it was one of the most amazing documents ever brought before so grave a body. The entire absence of any new fact or argument, or any grievance to be redressed, together with the hurry to put the measure through, and get the laymen into power at the next session, rendered the case still more surprising. Without attempting to account for the wonderful transition indicated by these facts, we will simply say that the project was superseded by an arrangement to refer the question to the annual conferences, and to all the male members of the Church twenty-one years of age and over. The result of that reference, as officially reported in 1864, was 1,338 ministers and 28,884 members for lay delegation, and 3,069 ministers and 47,855 members against it, showing very clearly that the Church was not prepared for the measure. The General Conference of 1864, however, left the matter open, in opposition to

the votes of preachers and people reported by the bishops, showing an overwhelming majority of both opposed to the change, and reaffirming its approval of "lay representation in the General Conference whenever it shall be ascertained that the Church desires it." This gave the reformers much encouragement, and they pushed the agitation, by conventions, speeches, and documents, with unwonted zeal. What was the exact result of the voting we are unable to state; but the General Conference of 1868 proceeded to adopt a plan, which, if approved by a majority of the people, and the necessary changes of the Discipline should be recommended by a constitutional majority of the preachers, lay delegates might be admitted to the next General Conference. It appearing to said conference, held in Brooklyn, New York, that the required majorities had been obtained, it perfected the arrangement, and lay representation in the General Conference went into practical operation in 1872. (See Dis., pp. 48-53.)

The writer was conscientiously opposed to it, believing that it would be better for all concerned to maintain the old system, and stated his views frankly in a pamphlet, entitled "Lay Delegation in the Methodist Episcopal Church Calmly Considered." But the change in the feeling of bishops, editors, and other leading ministers, from determined opposition to unhesitating approval, was so sudden, and without any apparent reason, we have been left to suspect that God led the movement, to prevent certain evils or secure important advantages which we did not apprehend at the time, and could not, therefore, appreciate. Like Methodism itself, it was certainly

a most marvelous affair, 1. In that more than ten thousand preachers, having the peaceable and sole government under God, and by his Providence of more than a million and a half of members, should cheerfully consent to divide their authority with said members. 2. It was stranger still that these preachers who had alone governed themselves from the beginning, choosing bishops to regulate their labors, should relinquish any part of their power of self-government. 3. And, what is most remarkable of all is, that they should place themselves in a position to be overridden and controlled by a very few lay delegates, by giving them a veto power over the action of the largest possible minority of the lay delegates, and the united action of the clerical delegates composing the General Conference. Our meaning may be better comprehended by looking at a few facts:

1. The plan provides for two lay delegates from each annual conference which has two or more clerical delegates, and one lay delegate from each of those conferences which are entitled to but one clerical delegate. On this plan the General Conference of 1872 consisted of 292 clerical, and 129 lay delegates. (See Dis., ¶ 84, and Journal, p. 29.)

2. The plan also provides that these two classes may "vote separately whenever such separate vote shall be demanded by one-third of either order; and in such cases the concurrent vote of both orders shall be necessary to complete an action." (See Dis., ¶ 90.)

3. The motion was twice made by a layman in the General Conference of 1872 to vote in this way, and was lost in both cases by only two votes—that is, two less than one-third. In the second case,

ninety-eight votes were cast, thirty-one for the measure, and sixty-seven against it. The change of a *single* vote from nay to yea would have given *fifty* laymen complete control of the elections to which the motions referred. They could have defeated any man, though he had been the choice of *all* the clerical delegates, and *forty-eight* of the ninety-eight lay delegates present, and so of any other action of the body. And what must have been very instructive to some of the clerical heroes of lay delegation, many of their chief lay coadjutors voted in the case named *to give* those fifty laymen just that control. (See Journals, pp. 291, 349.) Besides, as the number of lay delegates present decreases, the number necessary to control the body decreases. Once, we believe, during the General Conference of 1872, thirty-seven laymen were a ruling majority for all veto purposes.

But it matters little now who was right or who wrong—lay delegation is a settled fact for good or evil; and it becomes every lover of Methodism to make the best of it. It will undoubtedly lead to some other modifications of our system, probably for the better; and we are not without hope that it will effect all its friends predicted. Our Church prospered more than one hundred years without it, and will prosper with it, if we live in and for God. If we do not, no government can make it a success; and the sooner it dies, the better for the world. Let us cherish her in the devout spirit of the poet, who sung:

“For her my tears shall fall;
For her my prayers ascend;
To her my cares and toils be given,
Till toils and cares shall end.”

The General Conference of 1872 justly commended the opponents of lay delegation in its address to the British Conference, as follows: "The minority, large as it is, have concluded, with remarkable unanimity, that the law which enjoins peace, and that we be of one heart and one mind, is of equal obligation with any law or precedent relating to forms of Church government. And they think it best to put away all strife, leaving to honest experiment to settle questions which much discussion has failed to settle."

THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES PORTENTOUS.

But, to return to the General Conference of 1860, which we left to follow out the action on lay delegation, we will add that it closed with rather dubious prospects. The John Brown raid, so-called, and his execution, had stirred the country from end to end. The Supreme Court was thoroughly committed to slavery. The South was pressing hard to extend its area and obtain the control of the government. While the conference was in session, Abraham Lincoln was nominated for the next President, and the canvass opened with unbounded enthusiasm. His competitor was Stephen A. Douglas, the Democratic candidate. The platforms of the two parties were squarely antagonistic, involving morality and religion. The Church, therefore, could not evade the contest. Ministers would be expected to take sides as they had *not* previously done, where the issue was about finances.

And the result was even worse than was anticipated. Mr. Lincoln was elected, and assumed the

reins of government. A few months after, 'South Carolina seceded from the Union, followed by other States. April 12, 1861, the war opened with an attack on Fort Sumter, and Northern soldiers began to move to the front. The rebellion absorbed the public thought beyond all precedent in our history. Regarding it as an outrage on God and humanity, designed to perpetuate and extend human oppression, it became a subject of prayer on all occasions. Never had there been a war, since the days of Cromwell, which elicited so much or so earnest and believing prayer. While we praised Lincoln and Grant and other prominent actors in the grand conflict, the feeling seemed to pervade all antislavery minds that God ruled the storm, and that emancipation was his object and was as sure as his almightiness. Even men who had been skeptical in religion, like Mr. Lincoln, seemed to be controlled by this conviction, and it was this that sustained them in the dark days of our terrible disasters.

But, though many of our preachers and people entered the army, the work of God did not entirely cease. Revivals prevailed to a considerable extent, though they failed to bring in new members enough to repair the ordinary wastes of death and our losses by the war.

CHAPTER XIV

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1864—CONDITION OF THE CHURCH—THE ATTITUDE OF THE WAR—ACTION OF THE CONFERENCE REVIVED—NEW BISHOPS ELECTED—DELEGATES FROM OTHER BODIES—DISCIPLINARY POSITION OF THE CHURCH ON TEMPERANCE—CHURCH EXTENSION—THE WAR OPPOSED—LEE'S SURRENDER, ETC.

THIS conference was held in Philadelphia, and was composed of two hundred and sixteen members. In reviewing the operations of the preceding four years, the bishops remarked: "The times in which we are assembled are unprecedented. A 'mystery of iniquity,' which was working at the date of your last session, and which had been working for many years, broke forth, in April, 1861, in a gigantic, thoroughly organized, and most defiant rebellion against the authority of the general government and the integrity and life of the Federal Union. The collisions resulting inevitably from this unnatural and wicked rebellion have laid waste large portions of our once fair and beautiful heritage, have sent tens of thousands to a patriot's or a traitor's grave, and have filled the land with lamentation and mourning. The rebellion still rages, but, we are happy to say, with lessening hopes and diminishing resources." (Journal, p. 274.)

But our Church proved herself eminently loyal

by giving the Federal government her most decided support, not merely by conference resolutions and financial contributions, but by her ministers and members flocking in large numbers to the field of battle. It could not, however, be denied that we had suffered some loss; yet, considering the circumstances, it was much less than we had any reason to expect. Our decrease during these years was 89 preachers and 50,951 members, many of whom had fallen martyrs to the rebellion; but we lost not a few from *secession* on the southern border of the Baltimore Conference, whose pro-slavery sentiments led them into affiliation with the Church South and the Southern Confederacy. They had not felt at home with us for many years, and, when the time came that they must make what appeared to be a final choice, they left. We decreased, too, in our tract collections to the amount of \$3,070.

But in the other thirteen items embraced in our statistical reports, we made a moderate gain, as follows: 252 local preachers, 124 churches, 313 parsonages, \$6,859 for conference claimants, \$150,740 for missions, \$15,655 for American Bible Society, \$461 for Sunday-schools, and \$2,370,896 in the value of our Church property; besides, we gained 1,253 Sunday-schools, 7,618 officers and teachers, 101,584 scholars, and 114,103 volumes in our libraries.

Our success in the missionary work was never more encouraging. No field was abandoned or missionary called home on account of the war. Indeed, both the foreign and home work were strengthened and extended, and the General Missionary Committee were so encouraged that they appropriated for

the support of missions that year \$425,984.14, or \$125,984.14 more than had ever been appropriated for a single year before.

The bishops congratulated that conference, also, on the success of the Book Concern, which had lately divided its capital stock with the Church South. They say: "We have the pleasure of announcing the cheering fact that this great interest was never in a more healthy and prosperous condition than it is to-day. It is not only able to meet all its liabilities and to carry on its extended operations, but the agents at New York found themselves able to make to the conferences dividends, which had been discontinued for several years. Last year, they divided four hundred dollars to each of the annual conferences, amounting to nearly *twenty thousand dollars*, and the same amount is continued for the present year." (Journal, p. 276.) But the conference adopted a report, which, while it is true in its statements, seemed to rebuke the book agents at New York for making the dividends named, and was construed to effect their abolishment at the close of the year, since which the conferences have received no dividends. (See Journal, p. 372.) This subject will probably come up for consideration some day, when this fact may be of importance.

Our educational institutions suffered somewhat by so many of their pupils going to the war, but they generally held on and prospered.

ANOTHER REASON FOR CONGRATULATION.

As before indicated, the last General Conference adjourned with a war cloud gathering in the South

that filled all hearts with alarm. The struggle came, and progressed with various fortunes. The President did not understand God at the first; nor did the people generally. The slaves did. They regarded *Massa Linkum* as their Moses, divinely called and commissioned to deliver them, and they were ready to help him, if he would allow them. But that would not do. The prevailing idea, for a long time, was to put down the rebellion without disturbing slavery, and the war was conducted on that policy. But it was an error, and disasters multiplied, until many of the people, and finally the President and the officers, were made to see, if they would have God's help, they must accept his policy, and "let the people go," and fight for themselves. Many saw this from the beginning; but how slowly and reluctantly the leaders came to accept victory on these terms! They were brought to it, like Pharaoh, by defeat and trouble. But the day they reached the point and proclaimed unconditional emancipation (January 1, 1863), and converted the chattels of the rebels into soldiers, God's arm was made bare. Till then he had only given our armies success enough to keep them from complete discouragement, and to indicate whom he had chosen to plan and lead the battle. Now, that the object of the war was gained, and no compromise involving a retraction of the great act of justice and freedom was possible, the way to victory was open. God could now conduct his chosen and commissioned Grant, and his subordinates, to certain victory, by methods, unknown to books, that made old warriors tremble in their boots.

General Grant reached Washington from the West,

to receive his commission as "Lieutenant-General of the Armies of the United States," March 8, 1864. Arranging his plans, he announced his head-quarters to be "on the field," and, on the 5th of May, he was on M'Clellan's old ground fighting Lee. A false report reached the conference that Lee had surrendered. O, what a tumult! Such an outburst of joy was scarcely ever heard from a thousand people. The mistake was soon corrected, though nobody doubted that it ought to have been true, or that the event would soon transpire, and it did in less than a year, April 9, 1865. Thus, abolition which had given the General Conference so much trouble, became a *fact* by the Providence of God and the armies of the Republic.

In this state of affairs it was not difficult to change the general rule of our Discipline to prohibit slaveholding under any circumstances. (See ¶ 347.)

USEFUL MODIFICATIONS.

Special legislation for the arrest of a particular individual or case is generally unwise. We have several specimens of it connected with our history which fully substantiate this statement. The repeal of the supernumerary relation in 1860 is an instance of this kind. Four year's experience without it were sufficient to reveal the mistake, and it was restored in 1864. Like every other provision, it may be perverted to an illegitimate purpose; but that is not sufficient reason for its repeal. If conferences make an improper use of it, and give preachers that relation who are not entitled to it, let them be reproved, but never repeal a good rule to accommodate the cow-

ardice or infidelity of a conference. And for a conference to ask a man to locate after voting him supernumerary is certainly not treating him, or themselves, with proper respect. If he is really effective, pronounce him so, and give him work, when, if he is so "secular" that he will not do it, he will locate, or he may be fairly located without his consent.

This conference extended the time of ministerial service to three years, whether wisely or not the reader can judge. It also relaxed the rigidity of our rule with regard to class-meetings, which has probably increased our membership more than our piety. We are not quite sure, however, but as large a proportion of our members attend on this means of grace now as did before. The change seemed to us at the time to be in the wrong direction; but in many Churches, class-meetings, we are glad to believe, are gaining favor.

OF DELEGATES AND BISHOPS, ETC.

The conference was honored by the presence of Rev. W. L. Thornton, M. A., delegate from the British Conference. Delegates from other branches of the Wesleyan family were also received with fraternal greetings, indicating a marked improvement in the feeling of the family circle, which has warmed into closer fellowship ever since. So may it continue to be, until there shall be but one *spirit*, though there may still be several bodies!

Rev. D. W. Clark, Edward Thomson, and Calvin Kingsley were elected and consecrated bishops. They all seemed to enjoy the best of health, and bid fair to run a long and useful race, but unex-

pectedly finished their course in a few brief years. We shall refer to them again in connection with their death.

OF THE ITINERANCY.

We have spoken elsewhere of the impropriety of making no provision for the slightest deviation from our rules relating to the time preachers may remain in the same appointment. This conference took notice of several instances in the administration of the bishops wherein they evaded the rule to follow Providence, and no doubt did a good thing for the cause of God, though at the risk of being rebuked. (See Journal, page 259.) We mention this to emphasize the importance of some relief in this respect. To send forth bishops to appoint the preachers as Providential circumstances may seem to require, and yet forbid their doing it, is to assume that Providence or the bishops, or both, are not to be trusted, and that a rule is of more importance than any success which its temporary suspension may achieve. There is no part of our system more generally approved than the itinerancy, and the bishops have given ample evidence of their tenacity for it. They would not abuse any discretion that might be given them to its detriment. There is more danger of breaking it down by too much rigidity than by too little. Most of the objections we hear, arise from special cases of revival, church building, etc., where no stranger could take the work and carry it through like the pastor who commenced it.

The conference, however, did relax a little in several particulars, and allowed the bishops to appoint

men for a longer time than three years to edit *Zion's Herald*, to act as chaplains in hospitals, missionaries in neglected portions of cities, etc., increasing the exceptions, which were quite numerous before, though they tightened the cords on the regular pastors.

OF TEMPERANCE.

The disciplinary attitude of our Church on this subject has never wavered. As far back as 1780, nearly fifty years before the modern temperance revival, the conference asked, "Do we disapprove of the practice of distilling grain into liquor? Shall we disown our friends who will not renounce the practice? *Answer.* Yes." Three years after, it asked: "Should our friends be permitted to make spirituous liquors, sell and drink them in drams? *Answer.* By no means. We think it wrong in its nature and consequences, and desire all our preachers to teach the people by precept and example to put away this evil." • Six years later, drinking intoxicating liquor was prohibited as a crime, like drunkenness. The testimony of the Church has been regular from the beginning, so that when the public agitation of the subject commenced in 1828, many Methodists hesitated about joining temperance societies, on the ground that our Church was such a society. Dr. Bangs took this ground, and had a sharp contest with Dr. Fisk, Timothy Merritt, and others, and finally surrendered and fell into line, seeing that we could not commit ourselves too fully or too frequently to total abstinence. In 1860 it was made the duty of pastors to preach on the subject, and work to

create such a public sentiment as should abolish the traffic by *legal enactments*. Our Church has been as far ahead of the community at large, on this subject, as on that of spiritual religion. Hence, the General Conference of 1864 only repeated its long-established sentiments on the subject.

ANOTHER WANT SUPPLIED.

This Conference introduced another arrangement of much importance. For many years we lost valuable legacies for the want of corporate existence under the law. Therefore, it provided for and appointed a General Board of Trustees to receive and hold in trust, for the benefit of the Methodist Episcopal Church, any and all donations, bequests, grants, etc., made to said Church, "not specially designated or directed." This board is now in charge of certain properties to be appropriated for the promotion of specific and general objects. We have no means of determining their value. It is located at Cincinnati, Ohio, and is a body corporate, and ready to receive and appropriate funds according to the directions of the donors. (Dis., pp. 512-514.)

THE CHURCH EXTENSION SOCIETY FORMED.

Many had long seen the necessity of some systematic plan of aiding young and poor societies in erecting churches. They had studied the arrangements of our English brethren for this purpose, but had failed to see how they could be made available for us with our numerous conferences and widely extended work. The New England Conference had already organized a society of the kind for its own

use. But the necessity was imperative, and a committee was raised at this conference to consider and report. The result was the organization of the society above named, to be located at Philadelphia. (See Dis., ¶ 395, 420.) Rev. Samuel Y. Monroe, D. D., was appointed its first Corresponding Secretary. But his health soon became impaired, and he was unable to carry out his plans as he hoped. Still he pressed forward, and was one day found dead near the railroad track, having fallen from the platform, in his weakness, as was believed. He was an able man, and devoted to his work. Rev. A. J. Kynett, D. D., was soon after appointed to succeed him, and has held the office ever since.

The society was a grand conception, and was just in season to assist in meeting the demands of the new and extended fields that were about to claim our cultivation. Though still in its youth, it has done a good work by its gifts and labors, especially among our lately emancipated brethren of the South. Its receipts from all sources have been as follows:

Year.	Receipts.	Year.	Receipts.	Year.	Receipts.
1866 *	\$59,277 17	1869		1872	127,920 93
1867	30,961 42	1870	133,771 44	1873	137,101 78
1868		1871	169,852 18	1874	132,849 22

The conference adjourned on the 27th day of its session, anticipating a variety of good and evil results from its action as usual, and went to their respective fields to be surprised to see how little the people knew or cared about what had been done. General Conferences seldom enact prudential rules that

*The year includes the receipts of eighteen months.

have not already been practically adopted; and where they do make one, it soon falls through, unless it commends itself to the common sense of the masses. This lower house is a conservative element in Methodism, which is not fully appreciated. It is less important, therefore, who compose the General Conference, as we have sometimes imagined. The great Church-wheel rolls right on, grinding out grand spiritual results, without seeming to be much affected by the little modifications which occur in its subordinate machinery.

THE WAR OPPOSED.

Hopeful, as were many, with regard to the country at the adjournment of the late conference, some were filled with the most painful apprehensions. There was a large party of pro-slavery men, embracing some members and even ministers of all the Churches, who had kept up one continual wail of opposition to the Government and the war from the beginning. Secret organizations had been formed in the North in the interest of rebellion, and plots for compromise and defeat were rife, so that it was difficult to tell exactly where we stood. The strength of this feeling was revealed at the National Democratic Convention, held August 29th, at Chicago, which nominated General M'Clellan for President, who had distinguished himself by playing fight on the Potomac, where Grant was now fighting in earnest, and successfully. The Ex-Rev. C. Chauncey Burr, of New Jersey, expressed the sentiments of that body, no doubt, when he said:

“The South could not honorably lay down her

arms, for she was fighting for her honor. Two millions of men had been sent down to the slaughterpens of the South, and the army of Lincoln could not again be filled, neither by enlistments nor conscription. If he ever uttered a prayer, it was that no one of the States of the Union should be conquered and subjugated."

The platform of the Convention was squarely against the war, and was calculated to cheer the rebels and dishearten the North. But just then, to neutralize these traitorous operations, God gave the veto to it, and it was flashed over the country, "Sherman has taken Atlanta!" "Farragut has carried the defenses of Mobile!" and the President called for thanksgiving in all the Churches, and along all our lines, recognizing our obligations to the Ruler of the universe, and sending a thrill of courage to every wavering heart. Then came Sheridan's marvelous triumphs in the valley, and a little later, the elections in Vermont and Maine, showing increasing determination to stand by the Government. Finally, the presidential election arrived, giving M'Clellan but three States, New Jersey, Delaware, and Kentucky, and to Lincoln all the rest, with a popular majority of 411,228. The election for Congressmen was not less demonstrative, giving the House of Representatives 143 Republicans to 41 Democrats.

The Winter over, and various compromises having proved abortive, Mr. Lincoln entered upon his second term with these appropriate words:

"Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet if God wills that it continue until all the wealth

piled by the bondmens' two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword; as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, 'The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.' With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive to finish the work we are in, to bind up the Nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphan, and achieve and cherish a just and a lasting peace among ourselves, and with all nations."

While these terrible struggles were filling the air with conflicting reports and prospects, and more than one million of our husbands, fathers, and sons were away from their homes fighting for the Union, the chances for religious prosperity were small. Yet the work of God went steadily on. Grant kept unusually still, fighting out the battle on his own well chosen line, bound to conquer if it took "all Summer." But thank God, it did not. One night, while sitting in his tent contemplating the situation, feeling certain of victory, he received a little note from his antagonist, which ended the strife. It read as follows:

"HEADQUARTERS ARMY NORTHERN VIRGINIA, }
April 9, 1865. }

GENERAL: I received your letter of this date, containing the terms of surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia, as proposed by you. As they are substantially the same as those expressed in your letter of the 8th inst., they are accepted. I will proceed to designate the proper officers to carry the stipulations into effect.

R. E. LEE, General.

"Lieutenant-General, U. S. GRANT."

We have given this brief sketch of our surroundings at the time under consideration, that the reader may appreciate the situation, and give thanks to God who gave us the victory. But no pen can do justice to the subject.

OUR LOSS OF MEMBERS DURING THE WAR.

Our loss in numbers in 1864 was 1,608, making a total loss since the beginning of the war, of 68,661. The next year the tide turned a little, and we gained 6,668. Getting into better working condition, and occupying some of our old Southern territory, vacated *twenty* years before at the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church South, we gained the year following, 102,925; and in 1867, 113,897 members.

OUR REAL CENTENARY CELEBRATED.

We noticed the centenary of English Methodism in 1839, in which our Church participated. The hundredth year of American Methodism was now approaching, and the General Conference of 1864 resolved to turn the occasion to good account, by reviewing the mercies of God to us as a people, and by the presentation of pecuniary means for the better establishment of our various institutions, both connectional and local. The carrying out of the arrangement was committed to the bishops, twelve preachers, and twelve laymen, whom they should appoint. Education and church extension were specified as local objects, *two millions* of dollars were suggested as practicable, and the whole matter was referred to the prayerful consideration of the annual conferences and people.

The committee did their work promptly and well, laying broad plans, and forming a net-work of sub-agencies through which every part of the Church could be reached and interested. The first Sabbath in January, 1866, was devoted to religious services, for the special purpose of asking God's blessing on the centenary year. Sermons, developing our providential origin and growth, were preached in most of our churches, and served to awaken gratitude. The light that flashed upon the Church that day did for it more than we can possibly compute. A large part of our people originally came among us strangers, having been trained in other denominations, or outside of any of them. Getting converted to God, they were delighted, and joined the Church; but never until the centenary year had any real conception of its providential origin or unprecedented growth. The developments of that Sabbath and year fastened them to Methodism forever.

The services which followed, the documents that flooded the country, the united editorial proclamations of all our papers, the movements of the presiding elders, conference, and district committees, all contributed to deepen the impression and prepare the way for the coming contributions of the celebration proper, which was to commence on the first Tuesday in October, and continue through the month.

THE FINANCIAL RESULT.

The result in thank-offerings, as reported to the General Conference of 1868, amounted to \$8,709,-498.39, or more than four times the amount proposed at the outset. The committee's ideas, however,

were not generally accepted with regard to the *objects* to be particularly favored. *They* preferred connectional objects, while the contributors inclined to support their own local interests. With 23 colleges, 2 Biblical Institutes, and 75 seminaries, none of which were fully furnished with buildings and funds, and many of them heavily in debt and embarrassed, it was not strange that they absorbed the most of what could be spared for education. Besides, there was a very pressing demand for other institutions that must float into being on this tide, or be postponed for many years. Then, there were heavy debts resting on Churches, that could only be met by taking advantage of this extraordinary occasion. All these and other local objects so exhausted the liberality of the Church, that strictly connectional gifts were very limited. And it is probably well that it was so. The practical benefit to the denomination was, no doubt, greater, on the whole, than would have resulted from the course suggested by the committee.

Nor were these local contributions altogether *un*-connectional. The gift of the grounds and buildings of the Theological Seminary at Madison, New Jersey, by Daniel Drew, Esq., costing some \$600,000, was strictly connectional; and Heck Hall, at Evanston, Illinois, erected in commemoration of the mother of American Methodism, being 148 feet in length, 48 feet in depth, six stories high, and crowned with a Mansard roof, must be regarded as monumental, to say nothing of other establishments.

The contributions to the "Connectional Education Fund," received by the committee, amounted to \$12,000, while those to the "Children's Fund"

reached the sum of \$59,523.49. These moneys were intrusted to a board of education, which was appointed, and duly organized January 1, 1870, to look after the general educational interests of the Church, and to hold and administer all funds that might be given to the Church as such for educational purposes. The report of this board, presented to the General Conference in 1872, shows the Children's Fund to have been, at that date, \$83,785.66, and the General Educational Fund \$15,727 78; total, \$99,543.44.

This opened another outlet to the benevolence of a humane and Christian people who are interested in the education of poor young men for usefulness. The arrangement was timely, and has done good, and will continue to dispense its blessings, we trust, in the ages to come. Some will take more interest in this branch of our charities than in any other.

THE FREEDMEN'S AID SOCIETY.

The collapse of the Rebellion in 1865 introduced to the sympathy of the North more than four millions of colored freemen, without houses or lands or schools, and without the respect or pity of many of their old masters. Here was a loud call for help, to which the Churches in the free States generally and nobly responded, by furnishing supplies of food and raiment, preachers, teachers, and books. But the most of the older colored Christians, having been converted in their bondage by Methodist agencies, and carried away into the Church South, naturally gravitated toward their abolition Methodist friends of the North. Though they could not read, they understood the issues of the hour as well as white

folks, and knew who were their real friends. This circumstance, with others, rendered a Methodist society for their benefit necessary, and one was, therefore, organized in the Autumn of 1866, and called "The Freedmen's Aid Society." During the following eighteen months it collected and expended more than *sixty thousand dollars*. At the end of that time it was employing seventy five teachers, and giving instruction to twelve thousand pupils, to say nothing of the help it afforded in other respects. Reporting itself and its work to the General Conference of 1872, that body indorsed and adopted it, as many of the annual conferences had done before, placing it by the side of our missionary and other benevolent societies, and commending it to the liberality of the people. It was well thought of, and will need to be sustained for some years to come, in order to accomplish its noble purposes. Its collections have been as follows:

SUMMARY—ANNUAL COLLECTIONS.

1868, First year, total contributions.....	\$37,139 89
1869, Second " " "	50,167 24
1870, Third " " "	*93,513 50
1871, Fourth " " "	*82,719 49
1872, Fifth " " "	51,568 43
1873, Sixth " " "	55,134 98
1874, Sev'nth " " "	66,995 74
1875, Eighth " " "	86,560 33
Total.....	\$523,799 60

NEW SOUTHERN CONFERENCES.

The circumstances which demanded the organization of the Freedmen's Aid Society required, also, the resumption of the pastoral supervision of the

* Including appropriations from Freedmen's Bureau.

freedmen themselves. The General Conference of 1864, foreseeing their deliverance by faith, made provision for this, by authorizing the bishops to organize Southern Conferences so soon as the way should be opened and they should deem it expedient. The Missionary Committee anticipated the demand also, and provided for it. Lee surrendered, April 9, 1865, about eleven months after the adjournment of that conference, when the bishops, true to their instructions, entered the field, and organized the Holston Conference, June 5, 1865; the Mississippi, December 25, 1865; South Carolina, April 2, 1866; Tennessee, October 3, 1866; Texas, January 3, 1867; Georgia, October 10, 1867; and Alabama, October 17, 1867. Reporting these proceedings to the General Conference of 1868, they claimed for the new conferences 373 traveling preachers, and 90,071 members, besides a gain in Kentucky, Missouri, and Arkansas, in four years, of 177 traveling preachers, and 27,225 members. The General Conference of 1868 added to the list Louisiana, North Carolina, St. Louis, Virginia, and Wilmington Conferences. These conferences have shared very largely in our missionary appropriations, amounting in 1875 to nearly \$33,000. These facts show that the old sympathy of our Church for this injured people is not abated.

THE LADIES' AND PASTORS' UNION.

But Christian enterprise was not confined to the conferences or to ministers. War always generates some new ideas. That of the Rebellion aroused the ladies of the country to activities with which they had not been familiar, and demonstrated their capa-

bilities. This suggested other lines of action for ordinary times, and led certain ladies of Philadelphia to organize the society above named, to aid the pastors in evangelizing the degraded masses not reached by ordinary means. It was a capital thought. Why should the pastor do all the visiting, praying, and other work, necessary to bring sinners to the Church and to Christ? The project was at once approved by several annual conferences, and went into successful operation. The General Conference of 1868 gave it a smile of friendly recognition; and that of 1872 took it into full connection, and constituted it a regular society of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Its board of managers consists of *thirteen* ministers and *twelve* Christian ladies, appointed by the General Conference. (See Journal for 1872, pp. 391-393.) Mrs. Annie Wittenmyer is its popular and efficient corresponding secretary, and is well known to the Church. If the preachers will encourage this movement, it must become a powerful agency for good.

Methodism has been distinguished for welcoming all available agencies in carrying on the work of God. It has particularly recognized the capabilities of woman, and it is gratifying to see that increasing numbers and wealth have created no disposition to restrict her liberties. Though the Church has not provided for the induction of ladies into the ministry, she has laid no embargo upon their preaching, if God calls and the people desire to hear them. This new organization only professes to do more systematically and thoroughly, just what has been attempted by a few isolated individuals. God speed the enterprise!

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1868.

The opening of this conference developed other important facts connected with the preceding four years; but, before adverting to them, let us glance at Chicago, the place of its meeting. In 1831, it was a little settlement, situated at the extreme north of civilization, without one Methodist, but not beyond the range of Methodist enterprise. It was that year made a mission, and Jesse Walker, the hero of many victories in the Western wilderness, was appointed to take charge of it. In 1834, the Chicago mission reported *forty* members. Six years later, it embraced one hundred and fifty white and four colored members. At the session of the General Conference, it contained *eleven* Methodist Churches and one mission, holding property estimated at \$735,600, and numbering 2,315 members.

The General Conference never met so far West before, or under so peculiar circumstances. Bishop Janes had attended the British and Irish Conferences; Bishop Thomson had visited our missions in China and India, and organized the latter into an annual conference; Bishop Kingsley had visited Germany, Switzerland, and Scandinavia; besides, the bishops had organized four German conferences in this country, for the better management of the German work, in addition to the Southern conferences before named. Our increase in members in the four preceding years was 222,687, exceeding all precedent except in a single instance. We had also gained 1,691 Church edifices, and \$15,054,885 in the value of our Church property. There had been, too, a net

addition of 717 parsonages, giving us an increase in the net value of that class of requisites to the amount of \$2,571,145, making the increase of our property in four years more than the entire accumulation during the first ninety years of our history

Our educational interests were not less prosperous. The Concord theological school had been removed to Boston and opened under improved auspices; the Garrett Biblical Institute, at Evanston, Illinois, had erected a splendid hall; and the Drew Theological Seminary had been established and was in successful operation, with ample means to meet its expenses. Besides these, three other similar institutions had been started, namely: The Baker Theological Institute, at Charleston, South Carolina; the Thomson Biblical Institute, at New Orleans, with four professors each; and the Martin Mission Institute, at Bremen, with three professors.

Our increase in Sabbath-school scholars was 241,819, and in missionary collections more than double any preceding quadrennium. From 1860 to 1864, they amounted to \$1,153,041; but during the following four years to 1868, they footed \$2,457,548; yet, owing to the demands of our expanding work, the treasury was in debt, which is no disgrace to an enterprising people. It is wise to work well up to our capacity, and not allow much money or talent to remain idle.

ACTION ON MISSIONARY CONFERENCES.

The foreign missionary and Southern conferences established or provided for by the action of the General Conference of 1864, were "to possess all

the rights, powers, and privileges of other annual conferences, except those of sending delegates to the General Conference, and of drawing an annual dividend from the avails of the Book Concern and Chartered Fund, and of voting on constitutional changes proposed in the Discipline." (Journal, p. 138.) Understanding this, but wishing to present their interests to the consideration of the General Conference, they elected representatives to be present for this purpose. This brought up the question of their admission. After much discussion, it was voted: 1. To *repeal* the action of the General Conference of 1864, which restricted the rights and privileges of the said mission conferences. 2. To invest said conferences with all the rights, privileges, and immunities usual to annual conferences. 3. To admit such provisional delegates elected by said conferences to full membership in the General Conference, on the presentation of the requisite credentials. 4. To approve of the credentials of twelve such delegates, and admit them to seats in that body.

Among these delegates were several colored brethren, lately emancipated, and a missionary from India. The welcome of these brethren and the conferences they represented was most cordial. Some, however, doubted the *right* of the conference to admit them. The Discipline required that delegates should be elected as such by an annual conference; but these mission conferences, it was claimed, were not annual conferences in the sense of the Discipline. They were candidates for that honor, under specific restriction excluding them from representation in General Conference. They, therefore, had *no right* to choose

delegates; besides, it was claimed that they did *not* choose any, but "*representatives*" only, as is often done by official boards where they have something special to carry at their annual conference. It was also claimed that some of the delegates had not traveled "four full calendar years," as required by the Discipline, and therefore were not eligible to seats, even if they had been elected in due form; but all this was of no account in the presence of such an opportunity to rebuke defunct slavery and its cruel prejudice against color, and to throw our arms around its redeemed victims and lift them into deserved fellowship. The repeal of the restriction mentioned no doubt entitled the conferences to representation, but did not allow them opportunity to elect delegates for that occasion, or give the General Conference authority to elect for them—that is, so some argued; besides, they doubted the propriety of allowing conferences so distant as Liberia and India to send delegates. They believed it would involve a loss of time and an outlay of money which the benefits would not compensate; but an overwhelming majority took other views, and the measure was put through with a rush, we trust for the furtherance of the Gospel. (See *Daily Advocate*, 1868.)

OTHER INCIDENTS OF THE SESSION.

We have not attempted to narrate every incident of any one conference. The ordinary routine of business involves a great variety of subjects, and discussions of no public interest. One General Conference had under consideration nearly *five hundred*

resolutions, though it adopted only about *eighty*. Memorials and petitions are never wanting, and have to be treated with respect. Besides, there are generally more or less *appeals* from the decisions of annual conferences which have to be tried. But few of these transactions produce any serious modification of discipline or administration. Much time is given also to the reception of delegates and letters from fraternizing Churches, embracing at present most of the evangelical denominations. Rev. William Morley Punshon represented the British Conference at our General Conference in 1868 with much credit to all concerned. Bishop Ames and Rev. R. S. Foster, now Bishop Foster, were appointed to reciprocate his visit. Bishop Ames, finding it inconvenient to attend to the duties of this appointment, they were imposed upon Bishop Simpson, who, with his colleague, carried out the arrangement with equal honor to themselves and their constituents. (See Journal, 1872, p. 462.)

This conference made several changes in the Discipline, providing for the appointment of preachers more than *three* years as temperance agents, chaplains to reformatory, sanitary, and charitable institutions. (See Dis. ¶ 219); the reception of ministers from other evangelical Churches (Dis. ¶ 209); the appointment of *one* Book Committee instead of two (Dis. ¶ 438), etc. After a session of thirty-two days, it adjourned, with 72 conferences, 9 bishops, 8,004 traveling preachers, and 1,146,081 members.

CHAPTER XV

METHODISM A GRAND FACT—PROGRESS FROM 1868 TO 1872—THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1872—DEATH OF FOUR BISHOPS—NEW BISHOPS ELECTED—THE MISSIONARY CAUSE—NUMERICAL PROGRESS OF THE CHURCH—OTHER EVIDENCES OF GROWTH—STATISTICS OF ALL THE CONFERENCES—EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.

FROM what has been said, it must be conceded that Methodism, with all its mistakes and defects, is “one of the grandest facts in the history of the Christian Church.” One hundred and thirty-seven years ago it had no organized existence. To-day it probably enrolls a larger number of communicants than any Church in Christendom not supported by State patronage, and yet there seems to be no real abatement in its triumphs. “It has literally girded the globe with its far-reaching and beneficent agencies. To God, who originated it and has guided its labors, be all the glory.

But we are not quite ready to sum up and present our case in its full magnitude. From 1868, the work steadily progressed, yielding liberal results in all the evidences of success. Sinners were converted in great numbers, so that our *net* increase in the four following years, that is, from 1867 to 1871, was 275,242 members; which was 52,531 more than we gained during the four years last preceding. In the

mean time we increased 1,695 traveling preachers, and 1,913 local preachers; 2,319 church edifices; adding to the value of our net church property \$21,024,461. Besides, we added 739 parsonages, increasing the value of our parsonage property \$2,425,509. And most of these churches are *free*, and are less in debt relatively than our poorer churches were eighteen years before. And we feel safe in saying that *free* churches are gaining favor rapidly, as is the voluntary principle in meeting church expenses.

Our benevolences have not increased so largely, yet they have advanced, as will be seen by referring to our schedules of receipts given elsewhere.

THE WOMAN'S FOREIGN MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

Missionary work in heathen lands has always been obstructed by customs which exclude heathen women from hearing the Gospel from the other sex. This suggested to benevolent ladies to undertake the rescue of these women by female agency, and after much deliberation they organized the society above named, March 30, 1869, especially for this purpose. Appearing at the General Conference of 1872 by memorials and committee, that body indorsed the measure, and commended it to the patronage of the whole Church. It is undoubtedly another agency for good, and will contribute to swell the tide of grace at home and abroad. It is designed to work in harmony with our General Missionary Society, and all our other appliances. Its organization is very complete for the time it has been in operation, extending its agencies all over the country, enlisting many ladies who have the time and ability to render it important service.

It has 1,839 auxiliaries; 54,160 members; publishes *The Heathen Woman's Friend*; supports 19 missionaries, 100 schools, 108 Bible women and teachers, 150 orphans; and raised, in 1874, \$55,406.26. It has done a noble work, and is destined to be a powerful agency in Christianizing the heathen world.

And while I am writing of missions, I may as well anticipate another point suggested by the following heading:

THE MANAGEMENT OF OUR BENEVOLENCES IMPROVED.

We have already hinted at the organization of our parent benevolent societies, each of which was first largely managed by boards selected by themselves. This imposed great responsibility upon a few persons in and about New York and Philadelphia, and left other parts of the Church little to do in the matter except to furnish the funds. Seeing that such an arrangement was liable to give dissatisfaction, measures were devised to bring all our benevolences under the control of the General Conference. By an arrangement of its last session that body now appoints the boards and exercises certain jurisdiction with regard to benevolent appropriations that seem to respect the rights of all parties, and insure a wise administration. The measure had long been contemplated with favor, for reasons which we need not state, but appeared impertinent, so long as that body was composed of ministers only. It would have seemed to be an immodest assumption of power. But when laymen came to represent their own interests the difficulty was removed, and the plan was adopted. (Dis. pp. 367-375.)

Now, the whole Church, as such, ministers and laymen, control every thing through the General Conference, by the General Missionary Committee, and the boards it appoints and instructs; and the boards represent the whole Church rather than the localities where they assemble, and are less liable to be influenced by personal considerations and local affinities. And yet they are not above the people, who will furnish the funds no longer than they can see that they are expended with propriety. We are glad to make this concession to *centralization*, which we think objectionable in certain other applications.

OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1872.

The sixteenth General Conference was convened in Brooklyn, New York, from May 1st to June 4th, and consisted of 292 clerical, and 129 lay delegates. We have sufficiently noticed a leading topic of the session, in treating of lay delegation. Another, hardly less interesting, was the famous excitement about the Book Concern, to which I shall glance in giving an outline of the history of that institution. I have already referred by anticipation, perhaps with sufficient fullness, to several other matters upon which it passed. It was especially distinguished for establishing "District Conferences," to go into effect when and where the quarterly conference of any district should request it by a vote of the majority. The plan constitutes the traveling and local preachers, exhorters, district stewards, and the first Sunday-school superintendent of each charge members, requires them to convene *twice* a year, and do a large part of the business heretofore done by the quarterly

conferences. (See Dis., pp. 60-63.) Some of the districts have approved of it, and the plan is now in process of experiment. It is evidently favored from different considerations. Many think it will be useful in keeping out of the ministry a class of men who found their way into it too easily through the quarterly conferences. Others hope that the balance of the business of the quarterly conferences will be transferred to the district conferences, and pastors appointed to preside over them, and thus supersede the presiding eldership in such districts as may feel that they have little need of them. But still others favor the measure, believing that it will dignify the presiding eldership, and render it more useful and acceptable to all concerned. The Methodist Episcopal Church South, which originated the scheme, speaks favorably of the district conference meetings, yet *ominously* suggests that if they shall operate to depreciate the quarterly-meeting conferences, they will prove injurious rather than helpful. The plan will evidently need considerable modification to become generally popular. But it is safe, being left optional with each district to adopt it or not.

THE MINARD HOME.

The reader of these pages must have been impressed with the Providential origin of most of our institutions. Another instance is found in this Home. Abel Minard, of Morristown, New Jersey, who died January 31, 1871, was moved to leave a house and lot in Morristown, probably worth fifty thousand dollars, to be used as a home for female children of our foreign missionaries, and for female orphans

and half orphans of other ministers of our Church. The institution being presented to this General Conference, out of debt, and without funds, was accepted and commended to the patronage of the Church. It is probably the beginning of an establishment that will be found very useful. The Church that cares for orphans will never die. (Journal pp. 353, 374.)

MORTALITY AMONG THE BISHOPS.

This Conference was remarkable also for its funeral records. Four bishops had fallen and were honored with appropriate memorial services.

BISHOP OSMON C. BAKER was born at Marlow, New Hampshire, July 30, 1813; graduated at the Wesleyan University in 1834; became a member of the New Hampshire Conference, in which he served three years as pastor, one as presiding elder, but more as teacher in Newbury Seminary and the Theological Institute, at Concord. In 1852, he was elected bishop. Four years after, he was stricken with paralysis of his throat and lungs, while traveling in the mountains, from which he never recovered. December 20, 1871, he calmly fell asleep in Jesus. He was a sincere, pious, modest man; a good preacher, teacher, and presiding officer, understood theology and the Methodist economy better than most men, and was generally beloved.

BISHOP DAVIS W. CLARK was born in the Island of Mount Desert, off the coast of Maine, February 25, 1812. He was early converted, and in 1836 graduated from the Wesleyan University. After teaching awhile at Amenia Seminary, he joined the New York Conference in 1843, and continued in the

pastoral work till 1852, when he was elected editor of "The Ladies' Repository." In 1864 he was elected bishop, and gave himself fully to the episcopal work. Six years after, his health began to fail; but he worked on under great weakness, till he could do no more, and was carried to his home, where he closed his life, May 23, 1871, in the bosom of his family, nearly sixty years of age. He was a strong, decided, Christian man, minister, and bishop, and filled every position he was called to occupy with honor and usefulness. His closing words were, "The Lord is my refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble. Amen, amen."

BISHOP EDWARD THOMSON was born in Portsea, England, October 12, 1810, and, eight years after, came to this country with his parents, and lived in Wooster, Ohio. At the age of nineteen he graduated, and began the practice of medicine. Two years after, he was converted; and, in 1832, joined the Ohio Conference, and spent *six* years in the pastoral service; *five* as principal of Norwalk Seminary; *two* as editor of "The Ladies' Repository;" *fourteen* as president of the Ohio Wesleyan University, and *four* as the editor of the *Christian Advocate*, terminating in 1864, when he was elected bishop. On his way to the Pittsburg Conference he was seized with pneumonia in the city of Wheeling, and passed from labor to reward, March 22, 1870, before any one of his family could reach him. Bishop Thomson was a man of deep piety, fine taste, tender heart, extensive reading, a charming preacher and writer, and generally beloved. He lived just at the time and place where his rare talents were needed, and could be

turned to the best account. Though small in stature, he was great in every position he occupied, even in the love of his opponents. He did not have to seek popularity—he was *made* for it, and could not avoid it. He hardly had the voice and presidential bearing necessary to control a large conference of Methodist preachers, yet he ruled well even here.

BISHOP CALVIN KINGSLEY entered life in Oneida County, New York, September 8, 1812. It is rather remarkable that two of these honored bishops were born the same year, and another less than two years before; and all died about the same time. Bishop Kingsley was converted at the age of eighteen, graduated at Alleghany College in 1841, immediately became one of its professors, and was admitted to the Erie Conference. He was elected editor of the *Western Christian Advocate* in 1856, in which position he remained till 1864, when he was elected to the office of bishop. In the Winter of 1869–70, he went to China and India. On his way home he passed through Palestine; and having secured his passage from Beyroot to Constantinople, to visit our missions in Bulgaria, he went upon the house-top to enjoy a view of the Mountains of Lebanon. Upon his return to his room, he was seized with an affection of the heart, and soon expired. Love demanded the return of his remains to his home, but Christian heroism said no, let him sleep where he fell. So, our brother Kingsley lies in that far-off land, “held,” says his eulogist, “by the heathen as a hostage till the Church shall bring them to God. God took Moses up into Mount Nebo to die. So with Kingsley; the eyes of the whole world were upon him in his wonderful journey.

Let his grave remain where it is." (Journal, 1872, pp. 258-270.)

But, "though God takes away his workmen, he still carries on his work." To human eyes, it would seem that such heavy losses in the leaders of Israel must seriously retard the cause; but still it moves right on, showing that God is not dependent on any one man, or any number of men—a humiliating fact, which we are too slow to appreciate.

NEW BISHOPS ELECTED.

In view of this heavy drain upon the Episcopal Board, the conference elected *eight* new bishops, to wit: Thomas Bowman, William L. Harris, Randolph S. Foster, Isaac W. Wiley, Stephen M. Merrill, Edward G. Andrews, Gilbert Haven, and Jesse T. Peck. It also fixed the *residences* of all the bishops, distributing them over the continent from Boston to San Francisco, and from Chicago to Georgia, and not leaving them to select residences for themselves, as they had previously done. This arrangement, however, did not disturb the older bishops. Bishop Morris being released from full duty, returned to his home in Springfield, Ohio, where he ended his long and useful life in peace, September 2, 1874, in the eighty-first year of his age, and the sixtieth of his ministry. "All who knew him in the vigor of his manhood will bear witness that he deserves to take rank among the foremost men of his time. To the charming simplicity, both of tastes and manners, which eminently characterized him in all the walks of life, he added the graces of a genuine nature and a beautiful Christian character. As a preacher, he

was chaste, sincere, and, many times, greatly eloquent. As a bishop, he was considerate, careful, and judicious, and never forgetful of the most humble of his brethren. He was by nature reticent; but no heart ever throbbed with more genial and genuine sympathies.

His life on earth was a beautiful round of charity and faith, and his death a serene and fitting end to such a character and career."

The following table exhibits a complete list of the

BISHOPS OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

BORN.	NAMES.	ENT'D MINIS'Y		Ord'd Bish's	REMARKS.
		Confer'ce	Y'r.		
Sept. 9, 1747	Thomas Coke.....	Brit. Wes.	1778	1784	Died May 3, 1814.
Aug. 20, 1745	Francis Asbury.....	Brit. Wes.	1766	1784	Died March 31, 1816.
..... 1735	Richard Whatcoat.....	Brit. Wes.	1769	1800	Died July 5, 1806.
July 5, 1757	William M'Kendree...	M. E. C'h	1788	1808	Died March 5, 1835.
..... 1768	Enoch George.....	M. E. C'h	1790	1816	Died August 23, 1828.
Aug. 2, 1778	Robert R. Roberts.....	Baltimore	1802	1816	Died March 28, 1843.
Aug. 1, 1781	<i>Joshua Soule*</i>	New York	1799	1824	Died March 6, 1867.
Jan'y 7, 1780	Elijah Hedding.....	N. Eng'ld	1801	1824	Died April 9, 1852.
..... 1794	<i>James Osg'd Andrew*</i>	S. Carol'a	1813	1832	Died March 1, 1871.
Apr. 11, 1780	John Emory.....	Phila.....	1810	1832	Died Dec. 16, 1835.
.....	Beverly Vaughn.....	Baltimore	1809	1836	Died Feb. 9, 1858.
Apr. 28, 1794	Thomas A. Morris.....	Ohio.....	1816	1836	Died Sept. 2, 1874.
May 10, 1797	Leonidas L. Hamline†	Ohio.....	1833	1844	Died March 22, 1865.
Apr. 27, 1807	Edmund Storer Janes..	Phila.....	1830	1844	Residence, New York
..... 1802	Levi Scott.....	Phila.....	1826	1852	Res., Odessa, Del.
June 10, 1810	Matthew Simpson.....	Pittsburg	1833	1852	Residence, Philadel'a
July 30, 1813	Osmon C. Baker.....	N. Hamp.	1839	1852	Died Dec. 20, 1871.
Mar. 20, 1806	Edward R. Ames.....	Illinois...	1830	1852	Residence, Baltimore
Dec. 5, 1809	Francis Burns†.....	Liberia....	1838	1858	Died April 18, 1863.
Feb. 25, 1812	Davis Wasgatt Clark...	New York	1843	1864	Died May 23, 1871.
Oct. —, 1810	Edward Thomson.....	Ohio.....	1833	1864	Died March 22, 1870.
Sept. 8, 1812	Calvin Kingsley.....	Erie.....	1841	1864	Died April 6, 1870.
.....	John W. Roberts†.....	Liberia....	1838	1866	Died, 1874.
July 15, 1817	Thos. Bowman.....	Baltimore	1839	1872	Residence, St. Louis.
Nov. 4, 1817	William L. Harris.....	Michigan	1837	1872	Residence, Chicago.
Feb. 22, 1820	Randolph S. Foster.....	Ohio.....	1837	1872	Res., Cincinnati.
Mar. —, 1825	Isaac W. Wiley.....	Phila.....	1851	1872	Residence, Boston.
Sept. 16, 1825	Stephen M. Merrill.....	Ohio.....	1846	1872	Residence, St. Paul.
Aug. 7, 1825	Edward G. Andrews...	Oneida...	1848	1872	Res., Des Moines, Ia.
Sept. 21, 1821	Gilbert Haven.....	N. Eng'd.	1851	1872	Res., Atlanta, Ga.
Apr. 4, 1811	Jesse T. Peck.....	Oneida...	1832	1872	Res., San Francisco.

In the following table we give a view of our Missions, which will be instructive to many readers.

* Entered M. E. Church South, 1846. † Resigned the office in 1852.

† Missionary Bishops, their episcopal jurisdiction being restricted to the Liberia Conference.

SUMMARY OF STATISTICS FOR 1874.
FOREIGN MISSIONS.

Missions.	American Mission- aries.....	Assistant Mission- aries.....	Missionaries of the W. F. M. S.	Native Preachers..	Teachers.....	Members.....	Probationers.	Churches.....	Probable Value.....	Parsonages.....	Probable Value.....	Parsonages.....	Probable Value.....	Missionary Collec- tions.....	Other Benevolent Contributions.....	Sunday-schools	Scholars	Day-schools	Scholars
Africa.....	1	3	2	19	.....	1,802	140	24	\$10,600 00	4	\$6,975	.....	\$525 00	.....	.....	.....	.....	25	1,177
South America *.....	3	5	3	67	.....	1,081	640	1	150,000 00	3	8,000	.....	.....	.....	.....	31	754	11	190
Eastern China.....	5	3	3	3	3	25	26	.....	3,700 00	2	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	1	40	3	45
Central China.....	6	5	2	109	3	14	16	4	6,300 00	3	10,000	.....	.....	.....	.....	3	66	3	40
Northern China.....	1	1	.....	.....	.....	7,022	1,809	40	287,077 09	35	.....	.....	29,185 94	.....	.....	202	11,602	.....	.....
Germany and Switzerland	1	1	.....	.....	.....	388	229	3	69,160 00	.....	3,072	.....	2,080 85	.....	.....	12	1,013	.....	.....
Denmark.....	2	2	.....	16	168	1,597	291	10	43,810 00	.....	.....	.....	406 00	.....	.....	.....	1,312	.....	.....
Norway.....	3	3	.....	88	292	2,971	1,546	22	28,424 38	.....	.....	.....	525 17	.....	.....	24	3,426	.....	.....
Sweden.....	21	14	9	43	204	928	724	17	31,175 00	28	163,448	.....	14,905 47	.....	.....	82	3,426	.....	.....
India.....	13	2	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	4,543	213	7,445
Bombay and Bengal *.....	1	1	.....	6	.....	50	7	1	1485 92	.....	.....	.....	8 15	.....	.....	2	31	.....	.....
Bulgaria.....	1	1	.....	12	.....	1,600	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Italy.....	5	5	1	8	.....	2	6	3	14,000 00	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Japan.....	4	2	3	.....	3	.....	.....	2	53,386 00	.....	.....	.....	597 14	.....	.....	3	93	4	63
Mexico.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Total.....	75	47	23	385	1,785	16,570	5,524	135	\$588,802 99	78	\$91,495	.....	\$56,945 72	\$3,067 46	.....	22,420	22,940	259	8,960

* No returns.

† Members and probationers.

‡ Includes all mission property not otherwise specified.

TERRITORIES.

MISSIONS.	Missionaries.	Members.....	Probationers	Local Prchs.	Churches....	Probable Value.....	Parsonages..	Probable Value.....	Missionary Collections
Arizona.....	3	13	8	1	1	\$5,000	...	.....	.....
New Mexico.....	10	124	7	4	4	11,000	3	\$4,500	\$50 00
Total.....	13	137	15	5	5	\$16,000	3	\$4,500	\$50 00

DOMESTIC MISSIONS—FOREIGN POPULATIONS.

MISSIONS.	Missionaries.	Members.....	Probationers	Local Prchs.	Churches....	Probable Value.....	Parsonages..	Probable Value.....	Missionary Collections
Welsh.....	2	118	.....	6	■	\$2,500	...	.....	.....
German.....	201	9,761	1,805	129	214	542,100	104	\$122,140	\$6,037 33
Scandinavian.....	42	4,678	781	63	65	183,675	28	31,450	3,129 17
Chinese.....	2	18	.....	...	...	.....	...	.....	.....
American Indian.....	10	1,166	380	23	14	22,600	7	6,900	138 91
Total.....	257	15,741	2,966	221	295	\$750,875	139	\$160,490	\$9,305 41

The German work is particularly worthy of notice. We referred to its origin in connection with the conversion of Dr. Nast, who was our first missionary to that people in 1836. What has come of that little beginning may be fairly inferred from the following:

STATISTICS FOR 1874.

CONFERENCES.	Itinerant Preachers	Local Preachers	Lay Members.....	Churches...	Parsonages.	Sunday-schools.....	Officers and Teachers..	Scholars.....
Central German.....	114	95	11,516	170	69	168	1,897	9,818
Chicago German.....	62	52	5,454	89	46	103	953	4,677
East German.....	44	27	3,421	38	20	51	790	4,429
Germany and Switzerland	74	48	8,921	46	35	262	1,051	11,662
North-west German.....	69	48	5,028	73	40	114	927	3,870
Southern German.....	16	7	511	9	6	17	83	473
South-west German.....	118	146	10,933	169	69	190	1,818	8,698
Total.....	497	423	44,884	594	285	905	7,519	43,227
Last Year.....	454	408	42,642	546	262	820	7,084	40,960
Net increase for year.	43	15	2,242	48	23	85	435	2,258

THE NUMERICAL PROGRESS

of our Church affords many interesting and profitable lessons. As it is only to be obtained from cumbersome volumes within the reach of but few, I have tabulated the following figures, which I am sure will often be useful. While they reveal our general progress, they furnish painful instances of retrogression. We have no statistics prior to the first period named:

OFFICIAL REPORTS OF MEMBERS SINCE 1772.

YEAR.	MEMBERS.					Trav. Pr'ers
	White.	Colored.	Total.	Increase.	Decrease.	
1773	1,160	.....	1,160	.....	.....	10
1774	2,073	.....	2,073	913	.....	17
1775	3,148	.....	3,148	1,075	.....	.....
1776	4,921	.....	4,921	1,873	.....	25
1777	6,968	.....	6,968	2,047	.....	36
1778	6,095	.....	6,095	.....	873	29
1779	8,577	.....	8,577	2,482	.....	49
1780	8,504	.....	8,504	.....	73	42
1781	10,539	.....	10,539	2,035	.....	54
1782	11,785	.....	11,785	1,246	.....	59
1783	13,740	.....	13,740	1,955	.....	82
1784	14,988	.....	14,988	1,248	.....	83
1785	18,000	.....	18,000	3,012	.....	104
1786	18,791	1,890	20,681	2,681	.....	117
1787	21,949	3,893	25,842	5,161	.....	133
1788	30,809	6,545	37,354	11,512	.....	166
1789	35,019	8,243	43,262	5,908	.....	196
1790	45,949	11,682	57,631	14,369	.....	227
1791	50,385	12,884	63,269	5,638	.....	250
1792	52,109	13,871	65,980	2,711	.....	266
1793	51,416	16,227	67,643	1,663	.....	269
1794	52,794	13,814	66,608	.....	1,035	301
1795	48,121	12,170	60,291	.....	6,317	313
1796	45,384	11,280	56,664	.....	3,627	233
1797	46,445	12,218	58,663	1,999	.....	263
1798	47,867	12,302	60,169	1,506	.....	267
1799	49,115	12,236	61,351	1,182	.....	272

YEAR.....	MEMBERS.						PREACHERS.	
	White.	Colored.	Ind's.	Total.	Increase.	Dec'se.	Trav.	Local.
1800	51,442	13,452	.....	64,894	3,543	.....	287	.....
1801	57,186	15,688	.....	72,874	7,980	.....	307	.....
1802	68,075	18,659	.....	86,734	13,860	.....	358	.....
1803	81,617	22,453	.....	104,070	17,336	.....	383	.....
1804	89,603	23,531	.....	113,134	9,064	.....	400	.....
1805	95,629	24,316	.....	119,945	6,811	.....	433	.....
1806	103,313	27,257	.....	130,570	10,625	.....	452	.....
1807	114,727	29,863	.....	144,590	14,020	.....	516	.....
1808	121,687	30,308	.....	151,995	7,405	.....	540	.....
1809	131,154	31,884	.....	163,038	11,043	.....	597	.....
1810	139,836	34,724	.....	174,560	11,522	.....	636	.....
1811	148,835	35,732	.....	184,567	10,007	.....	685	.....
1812	156,852	38,505	.....	195,357	10,790	.....	716	.....
1813	171,448	42,859	.....	214,307	18,950	.....	700	.....
1814	168,698	42,431	.....	211,129	.....	3,178	729	.....
1815	167,978	43,187	.....	211,165	.....	36	729	.....
1816	171,931	42,304	.....	214,235	3,070	.....	695	.....
1817	181,442	43,411	.....	224,853	10,618	.....	716	.....
1818	190,477	39,150	.....	229,627	4,774	.....	748	.....
1819	201,750	39,174	.....	240,924	11,229	.....	812	.....
1820	219,332	40,558	.....	259,890	18,966	.....	896	.....
1821	239,087	42,059	.....	281,146	21,256	.....	977	.....
1822	252,645	44,377	.....	297,022	15,876	.....	1,106	.....
1823	267,618	44,922	.....	312,540	15,518	.....	1,226	.....
1824	280,427	48,096	.....	328,523	15,983	.....	1,272	.....
1825	298,658	49,537	.....	348,195	19,672	.....	1,314	.....
1826	309,550	51,334	.....	360,884	12,689	.....	1,406	.....
1827	327,932	54,065	.....	381,997	21,113	.....	1,576	.....
1828	361,562	59,056	538	421,156	39,150	.....	1,642	.....
1829	382,679	62,814	2,250	447,143	29,805	.....	1,817	.....
1830	402,561	69,383	4,209	476,153	28,410	.....	1,900	.....
1831	437,024	71,589	4,501	513,114	37,114	.....	2,010	.....
1832	492,364	73,817	2,412	548,593	35,479	.....	2,200	.....
1833	519,196	78,293	2,247	599,736	51,143	.....	2,395	.....
1834	553,134	83,156	2,494	638,784	39,048	.....	2,625	.....
1835	566,957	83,135	2,436	652,528	13,744	.....	2,758	.....
1836	564,974	82,296	2,833	650,678	.....	1,840	2,981	.....
1837	570,123	76,240	2,695	658,157	5,542	.....	3,147	4,954
1838	615,212	79,236	2,101	696,549	41,933	.....	3,322	5,792
1839	650,357	87,197	2,249	740,459	43,910	.....	3,557	5,856
1840	484,761	93,587	1,750	*580,098	272,820	60,361	2,203	4,935
1841	748,442	102,158	2,318	852,918	57,473	.....	3,865	6,393

* These are the returns from nineteen conferences, leaving *ten* out of the reckoning, owing to the General Conference having ordered that the minutes should close with the New York Conference.

YEAR.....	MEMBERS.						PREACH'RS.	
	White.	Colored.	Ind's.	Total.	Increase	Decrease.	Trav.	Local.
1842	803,988	107,296	2,617	913,901	60,983	.....	4,044	7,144
1843	936,736	128,410	3,379	1,068,525	154,624	.....	4,286	7,730
1844	1,021,818	145,409	4,129	1,171,356	102,831	.....	4,621	8,087
1845	985,698	150,120	3,769	1,139,587	.....	31,769	4,828	8,101
1846	613,125	30,515	659	644,299	.....	*495,288	3,582	4,935
1847	600,941	29,901	716	631,558	.....	12,741	3,642	4,913
1848	608,978	29,254	834	639,066	.....	7,508	3,841	5,191
1849	632,773	28,590	953	662,315	23,249	.....	4,023	5,154
1850	660,511	28,139	1,032	689,682	27,367	.....	4,129	5,420

From this year, no distinction is made in the color of our membership, and the statistics of members and probationers are as follows:

YEAR.	MEMBERS.					PREACHERS.	
	Members.	Prob'ers.	Total.	Increase.	Decr'se	Trav.	Local.
1851	621,905	99,899	721,804	32,122	.....	4,450	5,700
1852	638,530	90,170	728,700	6,896	.....	4,513	5,767
1853	648,680	103,957	732,637	3,937	.....	5,100	6,061
1854	679,282	104,076	783,358	50,721	.....	5,483	6,149
1855	692,255	107,176	799,431	16,073	.....	5,408	6,610
1856	698,317	102,010	800,327	896	.....	5,877	6,718
1857	709,968	110,551	820,519	20,192	.....	6,134	7,169
1858	768,000	188,555	956,555	136,036	.....	6,502	7,530
1859	832,657	141,688	974,345	17,790	.....	6,877	7,904
1860	859,726	134,721	994,447	20,102	.....	6,987	8,188
1861	865,446	123,077	988,523	.....	1,924	6,934	8,359
1862	843,401	99,505	942,906	.....	45,617	6,655	8,216
1863	822,845	100,549	923,394	.....	19,512	6,788	8,156
1864	829,379	98,941	928,320	.....	1,608	6,821	8,205
1865	822,711	106,548	929,259	6,668	.....	7,175	8,493
1866	871,113	161,071	1,032,184	102,925	.....	7,576	8,602
1867	971,866	174,215	1,146,081	113,897	.....	8,004	9,469
1868	1,060,265	194,850	1,255,115	109,034	.....	8,481	9,899
1869	1,114,712	184,226	1,298,938	43,823	.....	8,830	10,340
1870	1,173,099	194,035	1,367,134	68,196	.....	9,193	11,404
1871	1,231,008	190,315	1,421,323	51,189	.....	9,699	11,382
1872	1,272,496	185,915	1,458,441	37,118	.....	10,212	11,964
1873	1,288,704	175,321	1,464,027	5,586	.....	10,571	12,261
1874	1,345,089	218,432	1,563,521	99,494	.....	10,854	12,581

* This heavy decrease resulted from the separation of the Southern Conferences, before mentioned.

The membership of the Methodist Episcopal Church was, therefore,

In 1800, as 1 to 82 of the population.		
In 1810, as 1 to 41½	“	“
In 1820, as 1 to 37	“	“
In 1830, as 1 to 27¼	“	“
In 1840, as 1 to 29½	“	“
In 1850, as 1 to 33¾	“	“
In 1860, as 1 to 31⅔	“	“
In 1870, as 1 to 30½	“	“
In 1874, as 1 to 27	“	“

But this does not give the full strength of Methodism in this country. To complete the showing we need to add the following:

GENERAL SUMMARY OF METHODISTS IN THE UNITED STATES.

CHURCHES.	Itinerant Ministers.	Local Preachers.	Lay Members.
I. EPISCOPAL METHODIST—			
Methodist Episcopal.....	10,845	12,706	1,563,521
Methodist Episcopal South...	3,371	5,344	667,885
Colored Methodist Episcopal.	635	683	67,888
African Methodist Episcopal.	600	1,300	200,000
African Methodist Epis. Zion	694	1,416	164,000
Evangelical Association.....	737	476	90,249
United Brethren.. ..	967	742	120,445
Total.....	17,749	22,667	2,873,988
II. NON-EPISCOPAL METHODIST—			
The Methodist Church.....	624	300	65,000
Methodist Protestant.....	423	250	65,000
American Wesleyan.....	250	190	20,000
Free Methodist.....	90	80	6,000
Primitive Methodist.....	20	25	2,000
Total.....	1,407	1,845	158,000

This gives us a grand total of 19,156 traveling ministers; 24,512 local preachers; and 3,031,988

members; which is about as one Methodist to every thirteen and two-thirds of the whole population according to the last census.

To estimate, however, the full effect of this wonderful work of God, it is necessary to consider how many have been converted or otherwise benefited and gone to swell the ranks of the heavenly hosts, how many stand connected with other Churches who have felt its hallowing influence, and how many still linger in the various Wesleyan connections in other countries. Of the latter class, the following table furnishes a pretty accurate statement :

FOREIGN.	PREACHERS.		Members.
	Trav.	Local.	
British Wesleyan Conference.....	1,715	13,720	376,439
Irish Wesleyan Conference.....	152	760	20,740
French Wesleyan Churches.....	28	96	2,112
Australian Wesleyan Churches.....	348	1,438	66,686
Primitive Methodist Churches.....	1,020	14,838	164,660
Methodist New Connection.....	240	1,270	33,563
United Methodist Free Church.....	358	3,361	66,909
Bible Christians.....	244	1,747	26,878
British Wesleyan Reform Union.....	365	148	8,109
Methodist Church of Canada.....	1,004	1,027	102,887
Methodist Episcopal Church of Canada...	236	214	22,641
Total.....	5,710	38,619	891,524

Add these to the foregoing, and we find that Methodism in its several branches numbers 24,866 traveling preachers; 63,131 local preachers; and 3,923,512 members; all claiming to belong to the spiritual family first organized by John Wesley about one hundred and thirty-six years ago. It will be seen from these tables that Methodism readily adapts itself to the social life of all countries, and may fairly claim to be catholic in character, doctrine, and polity

But let us return to the Methodist Episcopal Church. It is an interesting fact that our care for the heathen has not retarded the work at home. Other indications of growth and strength appear in the following table of

OFFICIAL STATISTICS FOR 1874.

CHURCH INTERESTS.	For 1874.....	Increase.....	Increase in Five Years	Increase in Ten Years.
Bishops.....	12	.....	.....	.....
Annual Conferences.....	80	4	8	23
Itinerant Preachers.....	10,845	274	2,015	4,024
Local Preachers.....	12,706	445	2,366	4,501
Total Preachers.....	23,551	719	4,381	8,525
Total Lay Members.....	1,563,521	99,494	264,583	635,101
Church Edifices.....	14,989	460	2,941	4,974
Value of Church Edifices.....	\$69,049,523	\$2,716,943	\$22,796,456	\$45,268,013
Parsonages.....	4,989	311	1,021	2,136
Value of Parsonages.....	\$9,467,170	\$924,616	\$2,604,940	\$6,677,020
Total Value Church Property..	\$78,516,693	\$3,641,559	\$25,401,396	\$51,945,933
Sunday-schools.....	18,958	927	2,565	5,805
S. S. Officers and Teachers.....	203,409	16,229	18,813	54,934
Sunday-school Scholars.....	1,383,227	64,624	203,243	523,527
Total Teachers and Scholars...	1,586,636	74,853	222,056	578,461

That God has greatly favored us will appear, perhaps, still more forcibly when we consider the fortunes of other denominations, some of which had been in operation in this country nearly a century and a half, when Methodism made its first appearance. Besides, at its outset it had to encounter prejudices long fostered, and preach a theology which, though not new, had long been overshadowed by the teachings of opposing Churches. But it approved itself to the hearts and consciences of men by its fruits. It proclaimed the Gospel of a free and universal salvation, and called upon all sinners every-where to repent and be saved. The following table is based on the census of 1870, and

will show in some respects the *status* of the different sects:

DENOMINATIONS.	Churches.	Edifices, 1870.....	Sittings, 1870.....	Property, 1870.....	Property, 1880.....
Baptist (regular).....	14,474	12,857	3,997,116	\$39,229,221	\$11,020,855
Baptist (other).....	1,355	1,105	363,019	2,378,977	153,115
Christian.....	3,578	2,822	865,602	6,425,137	853,386
Congregational.....	2,887	2,715	1,117,212	25,069,698	8,001,995
Episcopal (Protestant).....	2,835	2,601	991,051	36,514,549	11,375,010
Evangelical Association.....	815	641	193,796	2,301,650	118,250
Friends.....	692	662	224,664	3,939,560	1,713,767
Jewish.....	189	152	73,265	5,155,234	418,600
Lutheran.....	3,032	2,776	977,332	14,917,747	2,909,711
Methodist.....	25,278	21,337	6,528,209	69,854,121	14,825,070
Miscellaneous.....	27	17	6,935	135,650	214,530
Moravian (Unitas Fratrum)...	72	67	25,700	709,100	444,167
Mormon.....	189	171	87,838	656,750	84,780
New Jerusalem (Swedenb'n).....	90	61	18,755	869,700	115,100
Presbyterian (regular).....	6,262	5,683	2,198,900	47,828,732	14,543,789
Presbyterian (other).....	1,562	1,388	499,344	5,436,524	27,550
Ref. Ch. in Am. (late Dutch).....	471	468	227,228	10,359,255	4,116,280
Ref. Ch. in U. S. (late Germ.).....	1,256	1,145	431,700	5,775,215	993,780
Roman Catholic.....	4,127	3,806	1,990,514	60,985,566	9,256,758
Second Advent.....	225	140	34,555	306,240	11,190
Shaker.....	18	18	8,850	86,900	39,500
Spiritualist.....	95	22	6,970	100,150	.....
Unitarian.....	331	310	155,471	6,282,675	3,280,822
United Brethren in Christ.....	1,445	937	265,025	1,819,810	18,600
Universalist.....	719	602	210,884	5,692,325	1,778,316
Unknown (Local Missions).....	26	27	11,925	687,800	98,950
Unknown (Union).....	409	552	153,202	965,295	915,020
Total.....	72,459	63,082	21,665,062	\$354,483,581	\$87,328,891

When it is remembered how weak and poor the Church was but a few years ago, these figures seem amazing. But not more so than the following recently prepared by Dr. De Puy, combining our

VARIOUS COLLECTIONS FOR 1874.

Conference Collections,	\$1,092,673
Miscellaneous Collections,	170,000
Expenses for Sunday-schools,	466,087
Expenses for New Churches and Church Improvements,	3,641,559
Expenses for Local Mission Work,	217,790
Expenses for Salaries of Ministers,	9,760,420
Local Church Expenses,	2,290,105
Total,	\$17,548,934

That the reader may see how these interests are distributed, we give another table of statistics, representing the facts as reported at the close of 1874:

CONFERENCES.	Tav'g Preachers	MEMBERS.		SUNDAY-SCH'LS.			CHURCH PROPERTY.			
		Total Mem- bers.....	Increase or Decrease..	Schools.....	Officers and Teachers..	Scholars.....	Churches.....	Probable Value.....	Parsonages..	Probable Value.....
Alabama.....	81	10908	1813	118	488	5153	117	\$42,452	2	\$900
Arkansas.....	36	5396	613	56	272	1904	44	57,910	2½	535
Baltimore.....	193	32264	278	349	5093	32534	359	2,718,400	73	309,200
California.....	133	9141	1743	158	1612	12217	111	649,775	62	67,700
Central German..	114	11516	305	168	1897	9818	170	583,500	79	104,400
Central Illinois..	249	26179	1900	397	3912	7712	320	1,017,950	129	170,825
Cent. New York..	282	32130	886	377	4430	26418	297½	1,869,211	165	332,144
Central Ohio.....	156	23354	762	327½	3948	25853	297½	788,885	70	105,950
Central Penn.....	217	37342	4081	452	6333	38994	392	1,606,910	92	213,600
Chicago German..	62	5454	93	103	953	4677	89	315,350	46	39,125
Cincinnati.....	172	35894	1099	345	4616	33554	367	1,882,200	79	208,950
Colorado.....	20	2089	398	47	299	2930	26½	128,100	6	8,500
Delaware.....	52	11834	724	152	1115	6866	173	197,200	12	6,643
Des Moines.....	142	18200	882	292	2603	17373	130	342,300	77	55,350
Detroit.....	246	23107	1313	369	4025	26745	237	1,505,500	123	180,825
East Or. & Wash.	18	1369	1369	15	114	599	7	10,000	6	10,600
East German.....	44	3421	155	51	790	4429	38	494,400	20	72,500
East Maine.....	97	10590	190	147	1463	9266	106	361,800	54	53,400
Erie.....	323	38028	1609	523	6142	40129	445½	2,242,800	172	297,375
Florida.....	31	2466	259	33	105	1090	35	17,968	4	1,160
Georgia.....	99	15118	618	185	724	7460	171	65,632	9	1,128
Ger. and Switz..	74	8921	408	262	1051	11662	46	291,673	35	.....
Holston.....	100	24454	875	233	1438	10226	208	162,060	9	6,650
Illinois.....	248	39501	3875	498	5226	33553	430½	1,430,715	137	198,900
India.....	46	1567	217	89	109	3691	13	24,725	26	41,300
Indiana.....	141	32934	1767	352	3406	24318	334½	735,325	74	85,300
Iowa.....	129	20289	d 32	394	3264	20382	238	578,940	73	66,674
Kansas.....	108	12136	d 6738	149	1381	8463	55	183,100	33	37,850
Kentucky.....	93	19162	698	171	1268	8437	160¾	395,550	12	19,900
Lexington.....	60	8396	d 1034	54	311	2630	59	135,825	7	3,450
Liberia.....	19	2032	d 68	25	169	1177	24	10,690	4	6,975
Louisiana.....	74	11737	968	83	375	4857	77	231,996	9	3,925
Maine.....	138	13340	d 25	137	1669	11708	113	559,400	60	77,450
Michigan.....	225	26592	1346	495½	4992	30667	225	1,174,000	142	193,150
Minnesota.....	141	12678	443	271	2376	14572	134	536,025	82	80,550
Mississippi.....	121	30343	.....	158	533	9023	157	132,405	10	5,900
Missouri.....	124	18666	3500	213	1705	11180	121	272,400	36	19,025
Nebraska.....	89	8693	1286	150	1014	6686	50	113,950	33	21,000
Nevada.....	17	496	d 25	23	160	805	11	62,100	15	14,150
Newark.....	208	36330	3483	316	4890	35293	243	2,776,350	109	522,100
New England.....	264	30156	1476	208	4188	33055	183	3,062,100	95	348,600
New Hampshire..	127	14408	598	133	1772	14400	117½	744,341	67	115,175
New Jersey.....	175	35101	3953	327	5345	32404	260	1,748,400	96	293,800
New York.....	273	44310	254	448	5963	38009	376	3,952,700	175	740,000
New York East..	266	42262	2224	280	5985	44716	282	4,383,900	137	693,850
North Carolina..	37	9131	868	134	516	5124	100	37,535	1	300
Nor. New York..	233	26052	1631	327	3612	20863	245	1,319,750	148	232,955
North Indiana..	170	31834	2430	381	4152	30610	377	938,540	95½	133,450
North Ohio.....	163	21994	d 106	296½	3577	23559	304	1,071,500	70	119,210
N. W. German....	69	5028	312	114	927	3870	73	131,395	40	38,550
N. W. Indiana..	152	25080	1939	315	3138	22211	271	785,675	73	114,362

CONFERENCES.	Thav'g Preachers	MEMBERS.		SUNDAY-SCH'LS.			CHURCH PROPERTY.			
		Total Mem- bers	Increase or Decrease...	Schools	Officers and Teachers...	Scholars	Churches.....	Probable Value	Parsanages ..	Probable Value
North-west Iowa.	62	4301	207	110	694	3608	18	\$43,375	21	\$13,590
Ohio	184	39835	526	542	5810	41119	503	1,158,510	104	205,250
Oregon	61	3725	d 1549	77	554	4471	64	161,600	33	30,907
Philadelphia	237	43667	4973	356	7191	54634	301	3,328,195	78	335,050
Pittsburg	298	62905	7140	619	8236	54104	614	2,852,386	77	176,010
Providence	181	20926	1579	180	3093	22442	166	1,611,755	81	206,200
Rock River	228	25151	802	294	3763	29292	245	2,176,669	118	206,600
Rocky Mountain.	18	694	276	27	166	1301	10½	63,500	3	3,700
South Carolina ..	92	30676	4653	207	626	9310	183	118,369	10	3,345
S. E. Indiana	120	25877	630	268	3055	22176	295	892,400	50	57,400
Southern German ..	16	511	511	17	83	473	9	13,550	6	4,400
Southern Illinois..	160	25826	1149	353	3291	23799	311½	600,125	79	89,725
South Kansas	90	12721	2721	157	1340	8206	43	97,800	41	27,945
S. W. German	118	10033	1458	190	1818	8698	169	461,720	69	75,550
St. Louis	136	16493	483	157	1208	9731	124¾	456,685	39	43,400
Tennessee	92	11538	3749	144	730	6688	156¾	193,335	5	1,000
Texas	77	17895	9	106	332	5411	67	65,055	6	1,850
Troy	264	34668	2195	389	4720	31869	297	2,404,360	149	337,933
Upper Iowa	191	19301	d 190	288	2805	21124	192	692,800	88	89,487
Vermont	120	11381	d 142	155	1686	12087	114	419,150	87	136,125
Virginia	60	6407	684	77	631	3323	95	118,050	10	13,125
Washington	106	26202	1368	238	1588	20219	177	422,258	19	20,620
West. New York.	231	19897	402	313	3594	22487	263	1,546,840	132	230,000
West Texas	61	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
West Virginia	153	29855	2952	355	3451	18959	305	530,825	43	48,600
West Wisconsin..	130	12487	786	312	2784	16720	170	408,400	76	58,800
Wilmington	124	26626	1137	336	4353	24154	312	1,159,025	48	127,060
Wisconsin .....	.....	15211	d 97	228	2476	16350	194½	807,950	99	119,677
Wyoming	205	27873	1444	426	4778	30455	291	1,318,140	126	252,570

These eighty conferences are divided into 452 districts, under the supervision of the same number of presiding elders. They also furnish 195 presidents, professors, teachers, and agents to our colleges and schools, besides numerous chaplains, and other workers in the different departments of Christian effort.

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.

We have deemed it advisable to present the foregoing statistics in prominent form, that the young reader may have a sort of starting point for his future calculations; but they do not cover the whole ground. Though the fathers seemed to have the poorest kind

of fortune for some sixty or seventy years in their efforts to promote education, when they really made a beginning they prospered, and no department of our work has succeeded better. We have glanced at the origin of some of our literary institutions, and have only room for a few other facts as to their present status. The following summary is believed to be nearly correct: UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES, 27, with 216 instructors and 5,900 students. ACADEMIES (including collegiate institutes and female colleges) and seminaries, 69, with 504 instructors and 14,100 students. The estimated value of university and college property is as follows: Buildings, libraries, apparatus, and furniture, \$2,615,137; endowment, \$1,928,123; total, \$4,543,260. The property invested in seminaries, female colleges, and academies, under the supervision of the Church, is over \$2,000,000. The grand total in colleges and seminaries, exclusive of theological institutions, is nearly \$7,000,000.

Besides these, we have the Boston Theological Seminary, which was opened in Concord, New Hampshire, in 1847, under the lead of Rev John Dempster, D. D., who afterward took an active part in starting the Garrett Biblical Institute, at Evanston, Illinois, which received its name and endowment of \$300,000 from a Methodist lady of Chicago. These institutions, with the Drew Theological Seminary at Madison, New Jersey, and others, before named, furnish the Church a pretty complete outfit for this department of its labors.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE METHODIST BOOK CONCERN—ITS ORIGIN, OPERATIONS,
AND PRESENT CONDITION.

THIS establishment, as before stated, made a very feeble beginning, in 1789, by the appointment of Rev John Dickins editor and agent, under the title of Book Steward. The measure was the natural result of the course adopted by Mr. Wesley at an early period in his public career. Undertaking a great and difficult work, with few to assist him, he availed himself of the press to a remarkable degree. Beginning with tracts, he advanced to pamphlets, and from pamphlets to books, until he had swept over the whole field of thought embraced in his comprehensive scheme of usefulness, and became a prominent publisher of religious works. His means of sale, like his whole plan of operations, were peculiar. He relied on himself and his co-laborers. Those who desired to preach under his direction, he pledged to the sale of his books and tracts, as he pledged them to strictly ministerial duties. Thus, all his preachers became colporteurs, and were examined from time to time with regard to this part of their duty. "Take care," said he to them, "that every society be duly supplied with books. O, why is not this regarded!" To Mr. Richard Rodda, one of his helpers, he wrote: "You are found to be remarkably diligent in spread-

ing the books; let no man rob you of this glory. If you can spread the magazine it will do good; the letters therein are the marrow of Christianity." To place his motives beyond suspicion, he consecrated all the profits that might accrue to the cause of God and the benefit of his growing societies. Under this arrangement his first missionaries to this country introduced the books wherever they went. But as the work advanced it became necessary to have other books. This, together with the trouble and expense of obtaining supplies from England, led to the issue of various works on individual responsibility, which created some alarm for the unity of the Church.

Mr. Dickins entered upon his duties in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, without *one dollar* of capital, and still charged with the responsibilities of the pastorate in an important Church. His first movement was to *loan* the Concern six hundred dollars of his own money, showing that he had confidence in the success of the enterprise. With this he republished the "Christian's Pattern," Mr. Wesley's translation of "Thomas à Kempis," a manual of piety, celebrated for its excellence through Christian Europe—a little work that had much to do with awakening the Wesleys and Whitefield to a sense of their spiritual poverty

The same year he issued the Methodist "Discipline," "Saints' Everlasting Rest," and the first volume of the *Arminian Magazine*. In 1790 portions of Fletcher's "Checks," and another volume of the magazine appeared. Thus he continued the sole manager of the business until 1797, when the conference, to assist him and doubly guard its press

against any possible impurity, appointed a book committee to determine what should be published. Two years after, Mr. Dickins was called to his reward, lamented by all who knew him, having successfully laid the foundations of an institution which was to be second to no other of the kind in the world. The same year the Rev. Ezekiel Cooper was appointed to fill the vacancy. Under his skillful management the business continued to prosper. In 1804 it was removed to the city of New York, and Rev. John Wilson was appointed assistant editor and book steward. Four years later Mr. Cooper resigned, leaving the Concern worth about *forty-five thousand dollars*, the net earnings of nineteen years. Mr. Wilson succeeded him, with Rev. Daniel Hitt as assistant. This year the agents were first released from the responsibilities of the pastorate, and left to give their entire attention to the business, preaching only as they might feel disposed. Mr. Wilson is said to have been an estimable man, a faithful minister, and a skillful agent. He conducted the business faithfully until 1810, when he also died, leaving the Concern in the hands of Mr. Hitt. The General Conference of 1812 appointed him principal, and Thomas Ware assistant; but the business failed to succeed as it had previously done. In 1816 both were left out, and Joshua Soule and Thomas Mason succeeded them, and by wise management saved the Concern from sinking under its embarrassments.

CHANGE OF POLICY ADOPTED.

Four years after, Mr. Soule was elected bishop, and Rev. Nathan Bangs was appointed to succeed

him, with Rev. Thomas Mason as assistant. The Concern was still heavily in debt. Its books were scattered through the country, in the hands of presiding elders and preachers, under a "*commission*" arrangement adopted by the General Conference some years before, and the returns were slow and uncertain. The agents saw that something must be done to vitalize the whole system, and immediately brought out several works for which there was a loud call, embracing Benson's "*Commentary*," and a new revision of the hymn-book. Both being re-elected in 1820, they, two years after, rented the basement of the Wesleyan Seminary, in Crosby Street, and commenced doing their own binding. This proved so great a convenience, that Mr. Bangs and his assistant, Rev. John Emory, who succeeded Mr. Mason in 1824, purchased the seminary building, and commenced doing their own printing in September of that year. It was during this administration that Dr. Clarke's "*Commentary*" was issued, and the unfortunate system of sending out books on commission was abolished. This was a great relief to the Concern, and gave new life to the business. On the 9th of September, 1826, the first number of the *Christian Advocate* made its appearance, and at once became a power for good. The General Conference of 1828 appointed Mr. Bangs its editor, and editor of Sunday-school books, which had then become a necessity; Rev. John Emory, principal editor and book agent, with Rev. Beverly Waugh, his assistant. It was during this term that Wesley's and Fletcher's works were published, and the magazine installed as the *Methodist Magazine and Quarterly Review*.

REMOVAL TO 200 MULBERRY STREET.

The business so increased that more room was needed, and five lots were purchased on Mulberry Street, and buildings commenced, where the printing-office is now located. Mr. Emory having been elected bishop in 1832, Mr. Waugh was appointed principal agent; Rev. T. Mason, assistant; Mr. Bangs, editor of the *Magazine and Quarterly Review*, and of general books; Rev. John P. Durbin, editor of the *Christian Advocate*, and Sunday school books and tracts, and Rev. Timothy Merritt, his assistant. In September, 1833, the front building, on Mulberry Street, was completed, and the whole business removed to its new quarters. Every thing went on prosperously until February 18, 1836, when the buildings and stock were consumed by fire, involving a loss of *two hundred and fifty thousand dollars*.

This was a heavy blow, little part of the insurance being collectible on account of the bankruptcy of most of the companies occasioned by a recent heavy fire in the lower part of the city. But it excited sympathy. Meetings were held on this account in various places, and contributions were made to the amount of \$89,994.98. This sum, with what was due the Concern, and the amount received from the insurance companies, enabled the agents to commence anew, with a capital, all told, of \$281,650.74. Mr. Waugh being elected bishop in 1836, Mr. Mason was elected agent; Rev. George Lane, assistant; Rev. Samuel Luckey, general editor; and Rev. John A. Collins, his assistant. The same agents were re-elected in 1840, with Rev. George Peck, editor of the

Quarterly Review and general books and tracts; Dr. Thomas E. Bond, editor of the *Christian Advocate* and Sunday-school books, with Rev. George Coles for his assistant.

Since then the Concern has been managed by the following agents:

G. Lane and C. B. Tippet,	Elected in 1844
G. Lane and L. Scott,	" 1848
T. Carlton and Z. Phillips,	" 1852
T. Carlton and J. Porter,	" 1856
T. Carlton and J. Porter,	" 1860
T. Carlton and J. Porter,	" 1864
T. Carlton and J. Lanahan,	" 1868
R. Nelson and J. M. Phillips,	" 1872

The Cincinnati branch-house was established in 1820, and has been managed by the following agents:

Martin Ruter,	Elected in 1820
Martin Ruter,	" 1824
Charles Holliday,	" 1828
C. Holliday and J. F. Wright,	" 1832
J. F. Wright and L. Swormstedt, . . .	" 1836
J. F. Wright and L. Swormstedt, . . .	" 1840
L. Swormstedt and J. T. Mitchell, . . .	" 1844
L. Swormstedt and J. H. Power,	" 1848
L. Swormstedt and A. Poe,	" 1852
L. Swormstedt and A. Poe,	" 1856
A. Poe and L. Hitchcock,	" 1860
A. Poe and L. Hitchcock,	" 1864
L. Hitchcock and J. M. Walden,	" 1868
L. Hitchcock and J. M. Walden,	" 1872

THE SUCCESS OF THE BUSINESS.

The business has prospered more or less under all these administrations. *Mistakes* have, no doubt, been made; but it should be recorded to the honor of all concerned, that not a dollar has been lost by the defalcation of its managers from the commencement of the business. The separation of the South, in 1845, was soon followed by lawsuits against the

agents at New York and Cincinnati, and resulted in the division of the property under an order of the court, taking away more than one full third of it, East and West. Ministers have always controlled the business until 1872, when *laymen* became partners in management, and John M. Phillips, Esq., was appointed one of the agents at New York.

In the quadrennial Exhibit presented to the General Conference of 1852, the agents congratulated themselves and the conference on the great advancement in their sales over those of the previous four years, amounting to a fraction more than *thirty-four* per cent. Still, they say, "the highest point ever yet attained (which was in 1850) is \$202,358.27; while they ought to reach annually at least \$250,000, or \$1,000,000 every four years." Beginning at that point, we find the sales to have been as follows:

Date of report.	Sales in 4 years.	Increase in 4 years.
May, 1852,	\$653,190 78	\$165,968 74
" 1856,	1,000,734 18	347,543 40
" 1860,	1,175,867 29	175,133 11
" 1864,	1,507,873 18	322,005 89
" 1868,	2,535,199 77	1,027,326 59
" 1872,	2,426,840 42	<i>dec.</i> 109,359 35

The profits of the Concern tally well with its sales, though making money was not one of the chief objects of its establishment. From the report of the agents made to the General Conference in 1836, we learn that the total assets of the Concern amounted to \$191,655.76. To this, sympathizing friends added by donations \$89,994.98, making a grand total of capital for rebuilding and carrying on the business of \$281,650.74. And this was largely

in doubtful accounts, which were estimated above their real value.

The net capital of the Concern November 1, 1871, as
per report made to the General Conference, May,
1872, was . . . \$1,055,179 57
Deduct the capital found as above in 1836, . . . 281,650 74

And we have a balance in profits of . . . \$773,528 83

Between 1836 and 1860 the Concern paid in Divi-
dends to the Annual Conferences . . . 305,457 00
To the Church South, as per Settlement, . . . 231,648 51
To the Church South, as per Interest on Bond, . . . 33,214 02
Cost on Church Suit, . . . 9,559 19
Amount transferred to the Cincinnati Branch, by
order of General Conference in 1840, . . . 105,103,56
Expenses of Delegates to General Conference, and
other bills ordered by that body, . . . 20,085 72
Paid in the Purchase and Support of Embarrassed
Local Papers, so far as ascertained, . . . 27,117 31
Paid Bishops' Salaries and Traveling Expenses, . . . 180,328 23

Total of profits in 1860, . . . \$1,686,042 37

Paid between 1860 and 1864, as follows:

To the Publishing Committee of the Pacific Christian
Advocate, . . . \$6,000 00
To the Publishing Committee of the California Chris-
tian Advocate, . . . 4,000 00
Paid on Account of Expenses of Delegates to the
General Conference of 1860, . . . 2,478 13
To the Committee on Ritual, and Sundry other Ex-
penses ordered to be paid by General Conference,
Paid Dividends to the Conferences, . . . 1,394 71
Paid on Account of Salaries and Traveling Expenses
of the Bishops' and to the Widows of Bishops, . . . 19,600 09
46,186 60

Total, . . . \$79,659 53

Paid out from January 1, 1864, to January 1,
1868, as follows:

Dividends to Conferences, . . . \$20,000 00
On General Conference Expenses, . . . 3,811 81
Other Incidental Expenses, . . . 1,346 42
California Christian Advocate, . . . 4,000 00
Pacific Christian Advocate, . . . 4,000 00
On Bishops Salaries and Traveling Expenses, . . . 79,894 50

Total of profits from 1864 to 1868, . . . \$113,052 73

Sum total of profits to 1868,	\$1,878,754 63
Profits and amounts paid outside of the business reported in 1872 for the preceding four years,	105,413 04
Making a grand total of	<u>\$1,984,167 67</u>

of profits by the business in thirty-six years, and largely paid out from year to year in support of outside interests.

So much for the Concern at New York. By adding what has been made by the Western Concern at Cincinnati, we may learn what have been the profits at both places; but we are not able to give the figures with accuracy, and will only say, it started, as before stated, with a capital of \$105,103.56, transferred from New York. Its net capital in 1872 was \$422,599.68, which is \$317,496.12 more than its original stock, and is, therefore, net profit. It also paid the Church South more than \$80,000, and has for several years met one-third of the bishops' salaries, and other expenses levied by the General Conferences upon the Book Concern.

These figures indicate something of the magnitude of the business, and of its steady growth from its unpromising beginning to the present time. The fact that the two Concerns publish nearly *three thousand* bound volumes of various sizes, ranging from a hundred dollar quarto to a ten-penny Testament, with more than half as many different tracts, each embracing from two to sixty-four pages, and hundreds of other works, such as maps, cards, leaves, etc., meeting nearly every want of our own denomination, to say nothing of others, is not only confirmatory of this remarkable exhibit, but goes to show that the business has been prosecuted in accordance with its

original purpose; namely, the intellectual and spiritual elevation of the people.

But it has not reached its present *status* without the ordinary vicissitudes and struggles incident to all great enterprises. Human imperfection has marked its whole history, as it has that of every other undertaking of even good and well-meaning people. Agents and editors have not been equally skillful or successful, though they were selected with usual prudence, and did the best they could under the circumstances. They have all, however, been honest, and in this respect stand indorsed by the General Conference, which is high compliment for men having charge of large funds in these times. None of them have succeeded in pleasing all their customers or constituents, or entirely escaped criticism. Some have thought them too slow, and that they ought to publish many things they did not; and others feared they were too fast; and perhaps they were right, at times, in relation to particular cases. None of them avoided losses by bad debts, fraud, or even theft. Considering the character of society, it is impossible to do so large and complicated a business, involving the employment of two or three hundred hands, and dealing with as many thousands in this and in foreign countries, without losses in all these ways. The shrewdest private dealers in a small way can hardly run a little store, over which they personally preside, without suffering more or less from these sources. Even managers of small moneyed institutions, who have little to do but to sit in their offices and watch the daily operations of their subordinates, are often victimized by them, and

suffer by the theft of large amounts. It is folly, therefore, to expect that these agents, necessarily absent a large part of the time attending the conferences, and looking after the other interests of the Church, as they have been required to do, being the custodians and managers of most of its benevolences,—it is folly, we say, to expect that they should steer clear of all losses. They are obliged to trust not one only, but many, as they necessarily carry on several branches of business, requiring experience and skill, which they do not possess. It was always so, and can hardly be otherwise. We say these things from twelve years' close personal application to the business, and know whereof we affirm.

A FURTHER WORD ABOUT PROFITS.

The amount of profits made is not a safe criterion by which to judge of the efficiency of agents. There was a time when the Book Concern alone published our denominational sentiments. It could then charge any price for its issues, and get it. The change of theological opinions among other denominations appeared at once in their books, and furnished a new source of supply to Methodists, when it became necessary for the Book Concern to reduce its prices. The establishment of the American Sunday-school Union and the American Tract Societies, to furnish unsectarian books, as they assumed, at a little above cost, made such reduction imperative. This, of course, reduced the profits. Then, again, the cost of labor and material is sometimes higher in proportion to the prices the books will bear. Besides, the *temper* of the Church has varied, calling at one time

for *cheap* books and a large business, irrespective of profits, and, at another, for splendid buildings, etc., which require high prices and large profits.

OF PROPER ESTIMATES.

It is also necessary, in calculating the profits of the business, to look at the estimate put upon the property of the Concern. All that one agent increases the ratio of estimation over that of his predecessor will appear in his accounts as profits, while whatever he reduces it, will reduce his show of profits. To form a correct judgment of the success of the business, all these things, with many others, must be taken into the account.

The writer's theory has always been to keep estimates clear down to *cash* value, not in this business only, but in every business. This was not done in the Book Concern for many years; but it worked no serious damage until the agents were required to divide with the Church South, and pay them their part in cash. Then they saw where they were, and testified that their property was not worth so much as their own inventory represented it. But the judge would not go back on their books. And, had it not been for a negotiation, in which the Church South acted leniently, it would have proved very disastrous. The agents, therefore, Messrs. Carlton and Phillips, very justly proposed to the General Conference of 1856 to reduce the estimate \$114,045.56, which was done, and a great deal more of the same sort afterward, absorbing a large part of the profits during the next twelve years, instead of showing them, to the honor of the agents. They really made, according

to the new inventory in 1869, \$789,043.35, or \$65,-753.61 per annum, notwithstanding the several financial crises which occurred during the time, and swept down many publishing establishments, and suspended others of the highest rank. And yet, until the necessary inflation of prices by reason of the rebellion, the agents sold books *lower* than ever before, and challenged a comparison of prices with their sharpest competitors.*

THE UTILITY OF THE CONCERN.

Financially, it has paid nearly all the general expenses of the Church. It has also furnished many conveniences in the way of General Conference journals, annual minutes, etc., which have never sold enough to pay one-half of the cost of their publication. By its books and papers, it has *defended* the Church against every assault. There is hardly a Church in the land in which witnesses to its moral and spiritual power can not be found. Fletcher's "Checks," Watson's Theology, Clarke's Commentary, and many others brought out by the Book-room, have delivered thousands of men from the entanglements of heresy. The writer will never cease to thank God for their happy influence on his own mind in settling doctrinal difficulties. His pastor had kindly tried to deliver him from the errors of his education, and, to make a sure thing of it, proposed to lend him four large volumes (one at a time) which he had on sale, called Fletcher's "Checks." They were accepted and read with pro-

* This declaration is substantiated in another work, which will be issued in due time.

found delight—yea, with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Watson's Theology came to his rescue afterward in a contest with Unitarianism, nicely drawn and sugared to captivate the young. O, how the darkness vanished before that mighty reasoner! If all who have been brought to God or sensibly benefited by our publications were to stand up together, they would make an exceeding great army. Yet more have been unconsciously benefited by them, and hardly know how. Their sentiments have been molding them into maturity of grace and thought, and have saved them from many a slip.

Should the Book-room be blotted out, it would put Methodism back fifty years. The Church would be at a loss to know what to do without it. It is an element of power which few appreciate, and should be nursed and cultivated. If it has sometimes missed the point, it has generally hit it. Let us rally around it, patronize, and prune it, if necessary; but keep it to its great work.

OF THE LATE DIFFICULTY.

We can hardly close this chapter without referring to the late difficulty in and about the Concern. It appeared from two Methodist papers, and others to which certain Methodists had pretty free access, that it had been suspected and whispered about for some years that every thing was not right at the Book-room. On the 21st day of September, 1869, these suspicions developed in staring capitals in the *New York Times*, having ripened into charges of flagrant fraud and corruption. This, of course, took the public by surprise, and no one more than the

writer, who, though he had been assistant agent for the twelve years preceding May, 1868, had never heard a whisper of suspicion from any source. What it meant or who was involved, no one could tell; but it created a terrible excitement, and rendered an immediate investigation by the proper authorities indispensable. Accordingly, the Book Committee, composed of *fifteen* distinguished clergymen of age and experience, convened November 4, 1869, and addressed themselves to the work, and continued in session some fourteen days, consulting all sources of information within their reach, but without finding a defaulter or any loss. (Journal of General Conference of 1872, p. 564.)

Further investigation being loudly called for, especially by certain outside parties, and the Book Committee desiring to extend their inquiries to cover new charges, etc., they met again January 27, 1870, and adjourned on the tenth of the following month, "making in all," they say, "a full month of most diligent and painstaking research," during which they examined over fifty witnesses, and carefully considered every aspect of the case. The result is given in the following statement, namely:

"After a sufficient mass of facts had been accumulated to allow of their classification, three questions were proposed around which those facts might be groupéd, and which might give system to further investigations. These questions were supposed to cover the whole ground, so far as corruption, frauds, and losses were concerned. They are as follows:

"1. In respect of the management or the conduct of the agents or either of them, has there been any fraud or corruption in the Book Concern?

"2. Has there been any thing corrupt or fraudulent in the

practice or conduct of any *employe* of the Book Concern, so far as the printing department is concerned?

"3. Has there been any thing fraudulent or corrupt in the practice or conduct of any *employe* in the Book Concern, so far as the bindery is concerned?

"These questions, at the conclusion of the investigation, were all answered in the negative—the *first*, by a unanimous vote; the *second*, by a vote of eleven out of thirteen, two declining to vote either way; and the *third*, by a vote of nine to four. H. Bannister was in Europe, and G. W. Maltby had been excused and had gone home on account of sickness." (Journal of General Conference for 1872, pp. 566, 567.)

This decision, in the ordinary course of events, would have ended the matter, the disciplinary provisions for detecting wrongs in the administration of the agents being exhausted until the meeting of the next General Conference; but certain parties, who evidently knew a great deal about the "suspicions" and "whisperings" before-mentioned, were not satisfied. They insisted on further proceedings, and even suggested the organization of a new court, embracing gentlemen of other denominations, contrary to all practice in Methodist jurisprudence; and they succeeded, not exactly in form, but in effect; for such was the clamor that, even after this verdict of complete acquittal of the parties involved was adopted and published, the committee, in their long-suffering, yielded so far as to put a new man (James P. Kilbreth, Esq.) to work, with plenary powers to subject all parties concerned to another searching inquisition, in person and by assistants, and referred to him "all the various allegations and charges of fraud and mismanagement made from time to time by the assistant agent against the Book Concern, and especially 'such books and accounts and business, of whatever

date or of whatever department of the Concern, as by such allegations are said to involve frauds, losses, or mismanagement.'” (Journal for 1872, p. 589.)

We mention this, not to blame the committee—they did their work well, considering their surroundings—but to show to what extremes the investigation was pushed. The whole ground had been gone over again and again by *ex parte* and mutual experts, without finding the long-sought object.

Still, the committee did not swerve from their verdict, and claimed to the last, 1. That no serious frauds or losses had been proved; 2. That it was impossible that the business should have prospered as it had done, if weakened by the constant drain upon its resources involved in the frauds alleged; 3. That the Book Committees, during the time involved, had “fully and upon personal inspection indorsed the business methods and management of the Concern, and had reported in the most approving terms of the ability, fidelity, and success with which every department was administered;” 4. “That during the year 1862, in pursuance of an order from the preceding General Conference [suggested by one of the agents], the books and business methods of the Concern were subjected to an unusually scrutinizing examination by a competent accountant, under the direction of the Book Committee,” consisting of Dr. George Peck, C. B. Tippet (an old book agent), Gardner Baker, W. H. Pillsbury, John Coil, M. D'C. Crawford, and S. Y. Monroe, which committee reported to the General Conference in 1864, after referring to that examination: “Careful investigation has satisfied us that the agents in charge of the

Concern are interested, capable, and faithful men. Each successive year the conviction has strengthened that they are the right men in the right place." (Journal of General Conference for 1872, pp. 590, 591.)

They go further even, and declare "that the result of these investigations has been a growing conviction that (instead of the 'chaos' which was charged) the business management is orderly and systematic; that theory and practice are as nearly perfect as could well be expected in a business so peculiar as is that of the Methodist Book Concern." (p. 592.)

MR. KILBRETH'S REPORT.

Mr. Kilbreth seems to have addressed himself earnestly to the work assigned him, taking a wider range than did the Book Committee, and ample time to traverse each point. His report contains many wise criticisms and conclusions. It is not, however, without mistakes. Had he consulted one man, who ought to know something of all the matters in question, he would have modified some of his statements, if not one or more of his conclusions; but, taken as a whole, it indicates marked ability, and adds great weight to the report of the Book Committee, especially with regard to the integrity of the agents, of the often-accused foreman of the printing-office, and of the untruth of the assumed losses. He says:

"I do not find any evidence whatever of fraud against Mr. Goodenough, formerly superintendent of the printing department. The printing-office, in its internal government, was, I think, never better managed than under his superintendency." (Journal, p. 615.)

The only complaint against him was that he bought paper of one particular man, a regular paper dealer. And the wrong of this consisted not in his paying more than a fair market price; for he denies this, and proves, by Mr. Warren, one of the two chief manufacturers who furnished the paper, that he paid less, and would have proved it by the other, if he had not refused to answer his questions. He says:

"I have not been able to discover the slightest evidence of any corrupt collusion between Mr. Goodenough and Mr. — in the business transactions with which they were connected. As to Mr. Goodenough's honesty as Superintendent of the Printing Department, after a thorough examination, I have not a suspicion or a doubt. That he discharged his duties faithfully is undeniable. Nor have I seen any evidence to convince me that the commissions of —, large as some of them were, came out of the Book Concern." (Journal, pp. 604, 605.)

We confess to particular pleasure in this estimate of Mr. Goodenough, because it perfectly accords with that of the agents for twelve years of intimate connection with him. If he erred in the matter complained of, he did so by following distinguished precedents in all departments of business, and gave another evidence of his fidelity by carrying out the standing instructions of his employers; namely, to purchase paper when and of whom he could get it at the lowest rate for cash.

Mr. Hoffman, Superintendent of the bindery, being called away to Chicago on business engagements, and having little opportunity to speak for himself, after a few of the early meetings of the Book Committee, seems to have fallen under suspicion. Mr. Kilbreth believed him to have been dishonest, though he concedes it would be difficult to prove it. His

criticisms of some of the witnesses against him are most pertinent and just. Had Mr. Hoffman been present to explain certain matters, best known by himself, the report would probably have been different. Messrs. Carlton & Porter employed him for twelve years, and Carlton & Phillips several years before and watched him, as they did others, more carefully than appears by the books; but failed to detect him in the slightest dishonesty. If they were at fault, it was in not paying him more for his services, for he received less than he was worth. But he is gone from a new and prosperous business to eternity, where, it is to be hoped, all wrongs will be righted.

How much loss the Concern sustained by him, if any, Mr. Kilbreth can not tell. "Not formidable enough," he says, "to create any great sensation;" "falls very far short of what has been so frequently reported;" does not "much exceed the expenses already incurred in investigating them;" and is not sufficient to embarrass the business.

We think this getting through pretty well, every thing considered, and so did the referee himself, for he says, after dragging through the labyrinth of documents, enough to make a printed book as large as the Bible:

"It is to me a matter of wonder that, in so large a business as the Book Concern has been doing for so many years, the frauds and irregularities discovered, after searching examinations, are so small—smaller, I doubt not, than would be found in the average in houses of equal business, and employing as many persons." (Journal, p. 616.)

Had the two deceased book-keepers, Mr. Edwards and Mr. Simpson, been alive and present to explain

their work; and had the former Assistant Book Agent been invited to tell what he knew of the matter, it is not unlikely that the findings would have been still more gratifying.

ONE MORE ORDEAL TO PASS.

But the investigation was not entirely ended. The Concern had one more ordeal to pass; namely, the General Conference. This body assembled May 1, 1872, and submitted the whole subject to a special committee of seventy-two able ministers and laymen from all parts of the country, one from each annual conference. This committee went through the case in a business-like manner, we judge from their report, calling for persons and papers at discretion, and coming generally to Mr. Kilbreth's conclusions, that the agents and Mr. Goodenough were honest, and no losses had been sustained in any part of the house except in the bindery, through Mr. Hoffman, but that there had been some irregularities in the book-keeping, etc., etc. These conclusions were accepted by the General Conference, and the long-continued struggle was ended. (*Journal*, pp. 364-368.)

Thus it appears that all these investigations came to about the same result. How much importance should be attached to the opinions rendered in regard to methods of book-keeping, business, etc., is a question worthy of consideration. Most men will be likely to take sides with honest and competent agents, book-keepers, clerks, and foremen who were in the Concern at the time of the transactions, and having to do with them from day to day, rather than with wiser men, coming in and investigating them

ten or fifteen years after, in the absence of important parties involved; and especially if the business was done successfully, and was indorsed, and even complimented, by its official supervisors and guardians at the time, as was emphatically true in this case.

We have presented this outline of the late difficulty and its results, without entering into the discussion of the merits of the case, believing that it would be useful to many who have not access to the proper sources of information. Personally, we had very little to do with the investigation, though always ready to respond when approached by the proper authorities. At the call of the Book Committee, we went before them, and testified on a few specified points. Beyond this, we were never invited by committees, experts, referees, courts, or conference, to give the slightest information on the subject. Why we should have been overlooked, if information was really the object sought, has seemed a little singular; for it was erroneously assumed that we had special jurisdiction of certain heads of departments, and in any case we would be as likely to know the facts by reason of our connection with the business as any other available person.

Here we leave the matter, trusting that every man, legitimately and openly concerned in the affair, followed his honest convictions, and did what he judged to be right. All may have erred. Some have been grievously wronged; but it is too late to repair the damage. The strife did not originate in the Book Concern, nor was that the center of its power. But, let us comfort ourselves with the fact that this was the first trial of the kind the Concern

had experienced since its commencement, in 1789, more than *eighty* years before, during which time it grew to be the largest religious publishing house in the world. This is an honorable record, considering how many financial institutions, even of a *benevolent* character, had then, and have since, been ruined by defalcations and bad management.

CHAPTER XVII.

RELATIVE PROGRESS OF METHODISM—SECRETS OF ITS SUCCESS—SUSTAINED BY DISTINGUISHED LAYMEN—PECULIAR MINISTERS CALLED—ITS FUTURE SUGGESTED.

FROM this hasty sketch it must appear to every reader, who is not blinded by prejudice, that Methodism has been peculiarly successful. A little more than one hundred years ago it had no organized existence upon the face of the earth. Some eight or ten persons then came to Mr. Wesley, who appeared to be deeply convinced of sin, and earnestly groaning for redemption. Here was the nucleus around which we now behold this mighty array. Has not the “little one,” indeed, “become a thousand?” This movement occurred in the city of London, and, for aught that was known to the contrary, was to be limited to that great metropolis. No mortal could then foretell that it would be re-enacted in any other place. It was a mere trifle—a circumstance that might have occurred a hundred times without public notice, and indicated nothing remarkable. But, like the “grain of mustard-seed which is the least of all seeds” that became the “greatest among herbs,” this germ has shot forth its branches over the four quarters of the globe, and innumerable birds lodge therein.

It is certain that such a work has never been accomplished in so short a time since the world

began. And it is not less certain that no system of religious propagandism has ever had so much opposition to overcome. Yet it has gone steadily on in weal and woe, converting its worst enemies, and succeeding often in its greatest defeats. Its prosperity has been universal and almost unceasing ; its adversity, only local and temporary. And its progress was never greater, or its prospects brighter, than at present.

With the Church of England, and other national establishments, we, of course, can institute no comparisons, because they swallow up all sects and parties that come within their geographical bounds, whether good, bad, or indifferent. Nor is it fair to compare Methodists, and other evangelical Churches, with those sects which pander to popular corruptions, and receive persons of all descriptions to their fellowship, without regard to their religious character. Rich and fashionable societies, which say little of our obligations beyond the observance of mere Church rites, may draw around them an accumulation of chaff, in which there will be little wheat. The comparison, to be just and fair, should relate only to those whose circumstances are equal in other respects, and who require the same change of heart and life as the condition of their fellowship. But we will not be particular. A few facts will be sufficient for our purpose.

The *Independents*, of England, arose about the year 1600. They dissented from the establishment under the leadership of Rev John Robinson, adopted Calvinistic views and Congregational government. The Baptists appeared soon after, adopting similar

sentiments and modes of operation, but differing from the Independents in relation to the subjects of baptism, and the manner in which it should be administered. They were afterward divided, a part becoming Arminians. The Presbyterians had commenced their career half a century before. But with this advantage as to time, and with others which we need not enumerate, the aggregate numbers and influence of all these denominations in England is not equal to that of the Methodists.

Methodism has not been less successful in America. The Congregationalists have occupied this field ever since the landing of the *Mayflower* in 1620. They first settled the country, particularly New England, and for many years managed matters, both civil and religious, much in their own way, and excluded all dissenters from their territory. They now number 3,233 ministers, and 323,679 Church members. The Baptists have had nearly the same time to multiply, their first Church having been formed by Roger Williams in 1638. The regular Calvinistic Baptists now number 12,598 ministers, and 1,633,939 members. The first presbytery in the country was organized in 1705, about eighty years before the organization of our Church; and, in common with the other leading denominations, the Presbyterians have done a great and good work. The Old and New Schools together embrace 6,241 ministers, and 675,042 members. The Protestant Episcopal Church has been less successful, though it commenced its operations in the very infancy of the colonies, and had much to favor it till after the Revolution. It at present numbers 3,095 ministers, and 254,857 members.

Other denominations have done well, and have contributed greatly to the religious influence of the country, but are less numerous.

Now, when it is considered that the first Methodist missionary to this country arrived in 1769, and that the Church was not organized until 1784, and has since had to contend with poverty and prejudices incident to no other Christian body that has attained to any considerable importance in the community, and that, nevertheless, it now numbers in all its branches 19,156 ministers, and 3,031,988 members, it must be conceded that it has been wonderfully favored.

Another view of the subject will indicate this truth with equal distinctness. In 1795 the Methodist Episcopal Church numbered 60,291 members, which was about one to every sixty of the whole population of the country. It now embraces about one in every thirteen and a half of the present population—showing a proportionate increase, exceeding that of the rapid increase of the population of the country, as nearly five to one. Now, with all respect to sister denominations, and we certainly entertain a high regard for them, we affirm that the like advancement is not to be seen in the progress of any one above mentioned. Indeed, several of them have lost nearly in the proportion that we have gained, and no one of them has increased in the same ratio by a very large per centum, notwithstanding *tens of thousands* who have been converted among us have united with them.

What has given us this peculiar distinction is a question that wise men have solved differently.

Some say one thing, and some another; but all, who trace it to any single circumstance abstract from others, evidently err, not fully comprehending the system in all its parts.

It can not be attributed to our doctrines merely, for others have preached the same. Nor to our literary attainments, for in this respect we are frank to acknowledge ourselves behind some other denominations. Though many of our preachers are literary men, and have astonished the world by their productions, the masses lay no claim to this character. They have, however, been grossly misrepresented by certain clerical pretenders, who have not distinguished themselves for modesty and good breeding, however profound their learning. But some of these have had their reward in the mortification of seeing their enlightened hearers forsake them to attend upon the more tangible and effective ministrations of their itinerating neighbors. They may yet learn that ministerial education does not consist in mere sheep-skin diplomas, and that it is not policy to ridicule whom God and his people "delight to honor."

Had Methodists been rich in this world's goods, their success might have been attributed to this cause; but, like the Savior and his early disciples, they have generally been poor. They could not appeal to the pride and vanity of the world, by erecting splendid churches, and otherwise making a great display, if they had been disposed. They have had to preach in private dwellings, school-houses, barns, and in the open air, till they could erect churches. And many of these, for the want of means, have been small and

often out of place, and uninviting. And the world has looked on and mocked, and professors of religion have not unfrequently joined in the sport. This same cause has been an occasion of reproach to preachers, who have often had to live in a style directly calculated to lessen the respect of community for them, and also for their enterprise.

We can not trace this prosperity to any one instrumental cause, and say, *that* is it; for it is evidently attributable to many causes. Our doctrines, our style of presenting them, our itinerancy, and other prudential regulations, have all had an influence. No one item in our economy has been without effect in carrying forward this grand consummation; and, we think, some of the least prominent of our measures have been most effective. God has seemed to approve the whole movement, and crown every honest and faithful endeavor with his blessing. To him we ascribe all the glory. He has gone before his people, and led them as a shepherd his flock, into green pastures and beside the still waters. He has attended them in dangers, and made a way for their escape. In difficulties he has been their helper, suggesting measures, suppressing prejudices, converting foes to friends, and begetting interest and liberality where there was enmity and covetousness.

Numerous instances have occurred where the influential, supported by the rabble, as usual, have determined the Methodists should not make a stand among them, and united to prevent it; and not unfrequently the minister of the place has taken a leading part in the conspiracy. But, notwithstanding their vigilance and power, Methodism has taken root

and become established; and would have been alike successful in more places of the kind had its friends been true to their principles.

POINTS OF VITAL INTEREST.

There are, however, several peculiarities which have especially operated to give effect to the movement that are worthy of particular consideration. One is the doctrine of justification by *faith*, and the clear witness of the Spirit to its accomplishment, producing “righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” Methodism found the Christian world generally in unbelief as to the possibility of *knowing* ourselves pardoned, or living *happy* in God, except in some rare cases. It taught repentance, obedience, and *hope*, but not *assurance*. The religion inculcated was, therefore, a *sad* affair—accepted, not for its own excellence, but to protect against future punishment, and borne as a burden. Of course, it brought no power, and made little difference in one’s life, except in ceremonial observances. Few cared for it, therefore, till brought into the presence of death.

Methodism presented religion as a thing of *power*, embracing pardon to the guilty and regeneration to the profligate, strength to the weak, eyes to the blind, and a complete supply of every necessity to enable one to walk with God, and be good and happy. It offered something to be obtained immediately—a joy unspeakable and full of glory to the poor and miserable. It was accordingly carried at the first to the most needy—in poor-houses, jails, and other sufferers among the lowest and meanest of human beings, and not preached merely, but exemplified, its

teachers witnessing to its truth, showing what it did for them. A teacher, to be effective, must “*know* of the doctrine” that it is of God—must *feel* the salvation he urges upon others as the greatest and grandest thing in the universe—must be *thrilled* with his theme.

Another potent fact is, that Methodists have aimed directly, and always (professionally, at least) at the conversion and sanctification of sinners. If they have preached the Gospel it has been for a purpose—to win men to Christ. And this being their object, they have generally followed up the preaching with prayer and private advices. Men who are really converted, and are earnestly seeking to convert sinners, will succeed. If Methodists let go of these elements of their power, they will be weak like other men—their doctrine and economy can not save them.

Underlying these qualities is another which vitalizes the whole system, I mean *faith* in the practicability of success under just the circumstances surrounding us. There are many who believe it possible to do some good thing “if, and if and if;” but the *ifs* being wanting, their faith is the poorest unbelief. The early Methodists started out in confidence—that “all things are possible to him that believeth,” and they struck for the most difficult cases first—for thieves and robbers and other public sinners. Many said there is no use in visiting convicts, or the miners, or the Catholics, or the slaves, or the heathen—they are beyond hope. Yet Methodists visited all these classes and found them more convertible than many religionists who were dead in trespasses and sins, and did not

know it. It was their faith that "subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword; out of weakness was made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens." With these qualities they were daring and persistent where others were timid, vacillating, and powerless. Looking unto Jesus, they endured the cross, despised the shame, and laid hold on eternal life for themselves and others.

DISTINGUISHED LAYMEN CALLED.

But no view of this subject can be complete without recognizing the providence of God in raising up *men* to meet the ever-recurring emergencies of the cause. We glanced at this point in connection with the British Conference. It is equally pertinent in application to American Methodism. In the days of the Revolution, when most of our preachers were foreigners, the Church was greatly assisted by influential laymen, whose natural connections led them to other and more popular associations. Judges White and Barrett protected Mr. Asbury, and other preachers, when they were hunted by political mobs, and afterward procured the erection of churches still bearing their names. Richard Bassett—also a distinguished lawyer, Governor of Delaware, a member of the convention which framed the American Constitution, and afterward a Senator in the First Congress, and Judge of the United States Court—stood by the Church and its heroic pioneers to the last. It is difficult to see what they would have done in those days of their greatest trials without such influential

friends; and there has never been a day since, when, with all our weakness and unpopularity with political and worldly men, that we have not had able and influential laymen representing our type of spiritual life in the high places of the nation.

The name of John M'Lean is worthy of honorable mention in this connection. While a young lawyer he was awakened and converted under the preaching of an itinerant, Rev. John Collins, at Lebanon, Ohio, in 1807, and took high ground for God and the Church through all his future life. Dr. Stevens justly says:

“The United States never had a more upright or a more honorable citizen, nor American Methodism a more faithful member than Judge M'Lean. He was commanding in person, tall and symmetrical in stature, with a Platonic brow, thoughtful, tranquil features, and the most modest but cordial manners. He was an able statesman—almost infallible in his cautious judgment—a thoroughly devoted Christian, persevering and punctual in the minutest duties of his Church, and catholic in his regard for good men of whatever sect. Lawyer, member of Congress, Supreme Judge of Ohio, member of the Cabinets of Monroe and Adams, and Supreme Justice of the Republic, he passed through a long life unblemished, and above all his titles, gloried in that of a Christian.” (Hist. Vol. IV, pp. 381, 382.)

His influence for the cause was remarkable. The first thing we recollect to have heard of him was, that while occupied with high and responsible duties at Washington, he would find time to attend his class and mingle with his humbler brethren and sisters in Christian social communion. We might

mention multitudes of other noble men, dead and living, who have contributed largely to the wonderful achievements under consideration, but our limits will not admit of it. But it may be said of most of them that they were brought into the Church while young, and owed much of their subsequent honor and prosperity to the religion of Christ. They sought first the kingdom of God, and all these things were added. Others, who were converted, might have done as well had they not become ambitious, and turned back to the beggarly elements of the world.

PROVIDENTIAL CALL OF MINISTERS.

A cause embracing such a variety of character and condition to be influenced as that of Methodism, requires a great diversity of taste, talent, and adaptation in its agencies. Striking out to save the world—broken up into different tribes, languages and social habits—no one style of ministers could reach the whole. A greater variety than could be produced by any human arrangements was necessary, and God seems to have met the demand by calling men of all nations, and about at the time when they seemed to have been needed.

For many years the Church had no periodical, and few writers, and did well without them. Nearly the whole strength of the ministry was applied to preaching and other revival measures. Every one defended himself when assailed as he was able, and passed along, trusting in God. But the time arrived when Methodism was attacked by Calvinists of different schools and sects in concert and by wholesale, and needed a David or a Paul to defend it; when,

lo! a young man from Canada appeared on the field with just the capacity and "mind for the work." He had strayed away from his birthplace, in Connecticut, into that wilderness, to seek his fortune, where he encountered a flaming itinerant, Joseph Sawyer, and was brought to God and to the love of the people he had only despised. The change was thorough, making him a new creature throughout, and brought down upon him the wrath of the wicked. But such was his nature, this only fired him with fresh zeal, and he went forth a flaming minister, and the most courageous, timely and valiant defender of the faith. This was Nathan Bangs, for many years book agent, editor, and chief controversial writer. Whatever may be thought of his later course with regard to our internal controversies, Methodism is indebted to him for its many and able defenses against the slander of its enemies. He did a noble work in this respect as well as in the expansion of our missionary, literary, and educational interests. He lived just at the time when his peculiar qualifications were needed and could be turned to the best account, and was, therefore, a great blessing to the Church.

Rev. Timothy Merritt and Dr. Fisk, of New England, belonged to this class, and rendered excellent service in repelling the darts of our enemies. They were both beautiful examples of Christian purity and urbanity, and wrote with much care and power.

But our cause often suffered more from neglect than from abuse. This was the case, at first, in New York, when the community was startled by the appearance of an old warrior in the pulpit, sword in hand. This drew the multitudes, when Captain Webb by his

prayers and tears won many to God. Other men of peculiar style or talent, such as Capers, Bascom, Emory, Fisk, and many more, were always about, and commanded attention. But in addition to these, the Church enjoyed the labors of still more remarkable characters, who so excited public curiosity as to secure Methodism a hearing.

Among these was John Summerfield, a young Irishman, who came to America in 1821, an accredited Methodist preacher of two years' standing, and was stationed in New York. Though in appearance but a boy, and but twenty-three years old, his fame spread through all the States, and he was called out on great public occasions, and astonished every body by his marvelous power. No one could tell why, but he moved every heart. He was simple and artless as a child, but completely consecrated to God, and preached in every look, tone, gesture, and motion. Though greatly excelled intellectually by Joshua Soule, Marvin Richardson, and others of his colleagues, he left them all in the shade in point of popularity. No house could hold the people who, in spite of prejudice against Methodism, would crowd to hear him. And, being true to Jesus and the Church of his love, he commanded respect for both that they had not enjoyed. His second appearance in America was on the platform, at the anniversary of the American Bible Society. An overwhelming address had just been made by a distinguished preacher, when his name was announced. "What presumption!" said one in a suppressed tone, "a boy like that to be set up after a giant." "But," says Dr. Bethune, "the stripling came in the name of the

God of Israel, armed with a few smooth stones from the brook that flows hard by the oracles of God." When he closed, the same critic exclaimed, "Wonderful! Wonderful! he talks like an angel from heaven." Summerfield died at the age of twenty-seven years, but his life was a benediction to American Methodism.

George Cookman, an Englishman by birth and education, belonged to this class of extraordinary men. He was a man of marvelous capabilities in the pulpit and on the platform. Coming to this country, he joined the Philadelphia Conference in 1826, and gave himself wholly to the work of the ministry, chiefly in the Middle States. March 11, 1841, he went on board the steamer *President* to visit his native land, and was lost at sea, with all on board. But his fifteen years of service brought many to God and gave a new impulse to every Church interest. His charming style attracted the attention of the upper classes of society, who generally repudiated Methodism. His fame as a platform speaker was world-wide. He was every way adapted to address large assemblies. The Representatives Hall at Washington was never more ably or usefully occupied than when he was Chaplain to Congress. And what was remarkable in his case, he was always true to God and his Church, he never lowered the standard of doctrine or practice to accommodate the opinions and tastes of his hearers, however high or honorable. He seemed to keep the fire of holiness burning in his own heart on all occasions, and that in a manner to attract rather than to repel. And not he alone, but Methodism generally, reaped the benefit of his hallowing influence. A Methodist

chaplain to Congress, and the grandest preacher on the continent! How strange that report sounded in the ears of our enemies! And it had its effect.

John N. Maffit, another Irishman, belonged to this circle of remarkable preachers, though he differed from all the other. As an elocutionist he was nearly perfect. His voice was as charming as a viol, and as various in its tones. But he was often extravagant in his opinions and expressions, and sometimes careless in his conduct, which exposed him to criticism and censure, even from his best friends. His generosity was boundless. He was open, frank, and confiding, forgave every body and expected every body to forgive him. We knew him personally, and while we could not wonder that he did not please some people, we saw much in him to admire. But good, bad, or indifferent, the multitudes would follow and hear his last word, if they did not submit to his inimitable pleadings with them to accept of offered mercy. He was a man of wonderful power and popularity, and probably brought thousands to the Church, during his thirty years' ministry, who would have lived in sin but for his peculiarities. He was preaching for us a few days in Boston, when he was elected chaplain to Congress. Of his last days we know little. Dr. Stevens says, "A cloud came over his eccentric career at last. Checked in the Northern Church, he found refuge in the Southern, and died in Mobile, mourned by many, impeached by not a few, but the wonder, if not the admiration, of all."

Another name belonging to this class is that of Edward T. Taylor. He was a child of poverty, born in Virginia, in 1793, and thrown upon the sea, a

daring, brave boy, but with a noble heart, strayed into a Methodist meeting in Boston, and after many strange hinderances was happily converted, and with three months' schooling, joined the New England Conference in 1819. Ten years after he became chaplain to the mariners of Boston, where a church was erected for him, which he occupied and graced until old age and infirmities commanded him to retire. While seamen of all nations delighted to sit at his feet and call him father, the *elite* of that city were hardly less idolatrous. Emerson, who is no worshiper of ministers, said of him, "No name in this city's clerical annals, not that of Cotton Mather, Mathew Byles, Peter Thatcher, or Lyman Beecher, will be more historic, or more justly so, for wit, imagination, and oratory, the highest gifts of intellect, no less than of the heart, than the name of Edward Taylor."

But while preachers of this peculiar style were introducing Methodism to the higher classes, there was another style, not less marked, forcing it upon the attention of the lower classes in the sparsely settled parts of the country, especially on our Western frontiers. Among these the name of Peter Cartwright occupies a prominent place. He was born in Virginia in 1785, raised and converted in the woods of Kentucky, and devoted sixty-five years to the itinerancy. He was a powerful man, hard as a rock, and entirely familiar with Western backwoods life, afraid of nobody, and full of zeal for God and Methodism. He was in the saddle nearly all the time, and in the woods three or four months in the year at camp-meetings, preaching sometimes twice or three times a day, and frequently whipping the mob and driving

them from the ground. He was presiding elder about fifty years, and a member of twelve General Conferences.

We might also mention James Axley, David Young, J. B. Finley, and hosts of others, who delighted in backwoods life, who went every-where preaching, living on wild game, or otherwise, as they could. They were just the men for the work. Polished preachers would not have undertaken it, and would not have succeeded had they done so.

The hand of God is also manifest in calling German preachers of just the style to take; in enlisting Indians, too, and negroes, of commanding influence, to lead their respective classes to the cross; and this is his established order—the same that he maintained in the days of the prophets and apostles; and so long as Methodists seek to do his will, his all-wise providence will guide them.

What is to be the future of Methodism we are unable to foretell. But if, with such means, against such fearful odds, and under so many discouraging circumstances, it has achieved such results, what may we not anticipate if we walk by the same rules and mind the same things? The Gospel is no less efficacious now than formerly, and people are, probably, about as susceptible of being effected by it. Only let the Church maintain the simplicity and faith of the fathers and employ her improving facilities for doing good as she ought, and what has been, will be only as the first fruits of a mighty harvest. But if she shall prove recreant to her high trusts, her sun will go down in shame and everlasting contempt.

But we must close. Enough has been said, we

hope, to convince the most prejudiced that a great work has been accomplished, and beget an interest in contemplating the system of agencies God has been pleased to acknowledge therein. Methodism is not fully understood. Her friends are too well satisfied with her success to be very particular about the *minutiæ* of her regimen; and her enemies find it more agreeable to their taste to denounce her, and sneer at isolated parts of her system, than to consider their relation to other parts, and the truth and deep philosophy of the whole. We are desirous of helping both, and, therefore, commend this volume to their careful consideration.

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